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The port of unrealized dreams: Alviso, California to 1900

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THE PORT OF UNREALIZED DREAMS: ALVISO, CALIFORNIA TO 1900

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History

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In Partial Fulfillment

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by

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ABSTRACT

THE PORT OF UNREALIZED DREAMS:
ALVISO, CALIFORNIA TO 1900

by Paul A. Phillips

This thesis examines the port town of Alviso, California, from the time of settlement to 1900. It explores Alviso's role as a maritime community. In 1849, Alviso was touted as the principal seaport for the entire Santa Clara Valley. Later, it slipped into obscurity due to competing railroads and neglect by the neighboring city of San José. This thesis finds not only a massive shift of occupations in Alviso from maritime industries to agriculture, but also a shift of demographics from a predominately white society to a community with a Chinese majority. The primary reason for the demise of Alviso was that major decisions regarding the town were made either by non-resident speculators or the citizenry of San José. Due to this reason, and the Valley's dependence upon rail rather than maritime transportation, Alviso waned by 1900.

Acknowledgments

Crediting one author for this thesis is misleading. Without the knowledge, talent, and support of the following, this project would never have materialized. First, I would like to thank my readers, advisors, and mentors: Dr. Stanley Underdal, Thesis Advisor, for his guidance and patience with this project; Dr. Elizabeth Van Beek, for her long-standing support and continual assistance with my prose; and Dr. Daniel Cornford, Graduate Advisor, for his helpful suggestions and extensive knowledge of the history of Santa Clara County. I would also like to thank the History Department's faculty and staff at San José State University. Over the years they all have molded me into the researcher, writer, teacher, and historian that I am today.

Several depositories were utilized for this thesis. I would like to thank the staffs at San José State University's Clark Library, Wahlquist Library, and the Government Publications and Special Collections departments; the Bancroft Library at the University of California at Berkeley; the Oradre Library at Santa Clara University; the J. Porter Shaw Library at the National Maritime Museum in San Francisco; the California Room at the Martin Luther King Library in San José; and the Alviso Branch of the San José Public Library.

I would also like to thank the Sourisseau Academy for their financial support for this effort. Simply stated, this thesis would not have been possible without their assistance. Their support and encouragement in the study of local history should be deservedly recognized.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to the staff of the Student Outreach and Recruitment Department at San José State University for their continual support of my educational goals. To my parents, a warm thank you for years of emotional support while I obtained my degree(s). Finally, my heartfelt gratitude to my wife and daughter for their understanding and support while this thesis emerged from conception to reality. I love you both.

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Illustration 1

Source: Thompson and West, Historical Atlas Map of Santa Clara County (San Francisco: Thompson and West, 1876; reprint, San José: Smith & McKay Printing Company, 1973), 24.

Introduction

The Santa Clara Valley has undergone several major changes throughout its history. It provided a home for the Costanoan people, a location for a Spanish mission and pueblo, and the first capital of the state of California. It later became a highly productive agricultural area, and finally the modern computer capital of the world. Hidden within the valley's tales of grandeur, however, is a neglected story that deserves mention. During the mid-nineteenth century, the tiny port town of Alviso was the sole maritime center of Santa Clara County. Most imports had to pass through the port. Agricultural produce, hides and tallow from ranchos, and quicksilver from the Almaden mines also found their way to this port from which they were transported by sea throughout the world. Today, Alviso is all but forgotten, a small Mexican-American barrio now incorporated into the city of San José.

This thesis examines the history of the Alviso area from the days of initial European settlement until the dawn of the twentieth century. When the town of Alviso was founded, it was touted as the great commercial shipping center of the Santa Clara Valley. The study of Alviso is maritime history, for its rise and ultimate demise were directly linked to its maritime past.

Maritime history has often been a misunderstood discipline. Historians have either viewed it as too large a topic or as too narrow. Indeed, maritime history is difficult to define.[1] Initially, maritime history focused on shipping lines, ships, and captains. Daniel Vickers notes that "nostalgia, romanticism, and an antiquarian interest in ships have been the stays that supported the field for most of the present century."[2] Such studies, he contends, were primarily non-analytical and celebratory in nature. Vickers calls for a new genre of scholarship to include the study of port towns and their inhabitants.

Recently, scholars have responded to Vickers's plea, and a methodological transformation in the study of maritime history has emerged. This new research is often called the "new maritime history" and focuses on people and places, not ships and captains.[3] Several significant works published in the last fifteen years illuminate the social and economic structures of maritime societies. General works have recast large cities as port societies whose role in

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[1] One ambitious definition states that maritime history can encompass "science, technology, industry, economics, trade, politics, art, literature, ideas, sociology, military and naval affairs, international relations, cartography, comparative studies in imperial and colonial affairs, institutional and organizational development, communications, migration, intercultural relations, natural resources and so on." See John B. Hattendorf, ed., Maritime History, vol. I, The Age of Discovery (Malabar, FL: Kreiger Publishing, 1996), xiii.

[2] Daniel Vickers, "Beyond Jack Tar," The William and Mary Quarterly, Third Series, 50 (April 1993): 419.

[3] Benjamin W. Laramee contends that "it is clear to the most casual observer that the most significant innovation in the writing of American maritime history in the past decade or so has been the increasing number of younger scholars who have focused their research on the lives of ordinary mariners, including those belonging to ethnic minorities, and on the role of women in this maritime society." See John B. Hattendorf, ed., Ubi Sumus? The State of Naval and Maritime History (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 1994), 370-371.

the development of maritime nations cannot be understated.[4] Likewise, general works on the economic paradigm of maritime societies have contributed to our understanding of the economic development of these maritime nations.[5] The role of labor in maritime history has been discussed at length, and indeed is the strength of the new maritime history.[6] Finally, the role of gender and ethnicity in maritime history has been adeptly researched and illuminates the social structure of maritime communities.[7]

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[4] For example, see Malcolm Tull, A Community Enterprise: The History of the Port of Fremantle, 1897-1997, Research in Maritime History No. 12 (St. Johns, Newfoundland: International Maritime Economic History Association, 1997); Michael B. Cohn, "The Maritime Impact on New York's Early Development, 1800-1860," International Journal of Maritime History IV (December 1992): 227-238.

[5] For example, see C. Knick Harley, "Aspects of the Economics of Shipping, 1850-1913," in Change and Adaptation in Maritime History: The North Atlantic Fleets in the Nineteenth Century, edited by Lewis R. Fischer and Gerald E. Panting (St. Johns, Newfoundland: Maritime History Group, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1985); Eric W. Sager and Gerald E. Panting, Maritime Capital: The Shipping Industry in Atlantic Canada, 1820-1914 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996).

[6] For example, see Paul C. van Royen, Jaap R. Bruijn and Jan Lucassen, eds., "Those Emblems of Hell?" European Sailors and the Maritime Labour Market, 1570-1870, Research in Maritime History no. 13 (St. Johns, Newfoundland: International Maritime Economic History Association, 1997); and Lewis Fischer, The Market for Seamen in the Age of Sail, Research in Maritime History no. 7 (St. Johns, Newfoundland: International Maritime Economic History Association, 1994).

[7] For gender studies, see examples in Margaret S. Creighton and Lisa Norling, eds., Iron Men, Wooden Women: Gender and Seafaring in the Atlantic World, 1700-1920 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Valerie Burton, "The Myth of Bachelor Jack: Masculinity, Patriarchy and Seafaring Labor," in Jack Tar in History, edited by Colin Howell and Richard Twomey (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Acadiensis Press, 1991). For ethnic studies, see examples in Gaddis Smith, "Black Seamen and the Federal Courts, 1789-1860," in Ships, Seafaring and Society: Essays in Maritime History, edited by Timothy J. Runyan (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987); W. Jeffrey Bolster, "'To Feel Like a Man:' Black Seamen in the Northern States, 1800-1860," The Journal of American History 76 (March 1990): 1173-1199.

Little work has been published on Alviso. The only one of significant length is an unpublished doctoral dissertation by James R. Curtis who examines the cultural-historical geography of Alviso from the days of the Costanoans to the 1970s.[8] This well-written and thoroughly documented work emphasizes the cultural structure of the town in relationship to its geographical surroundings. Most of his dissertation, however, focuses on the twentieth century.[9] Curtis later authored an article on the New Chicago land development scheme of 1890.[10] An article on the initial land speculation and foundation of Alviso Township was published in 1973 by Margaret K. Zebroski.[11] Finally, for twentieth-century issues, prolific writer and Mexican-American activist Ernesto Galarza examines the plight of Alviso and its predominately Mexican-American citizenry.[12]

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[8] James Robert Curtis, "Alviso, California: A Study in Cultural-Historical Geography" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1978). Hereafter cited as Curtis, "Alviso, California."

[9] Curtis only devotes fifty-two pages of text to the nineteenth century.

[10] James R. Curtis, "New Chicago of the Far West: Land Speculation in Alviso, California, 1890-1891," California History 61 (Spring 1982): 36-45. Essentially it was the chapter of his dissertation dealing with New Chicago.

[11] Margaret K. Zebroski, "Alviso's First Boom," Santa Clara County Pioneer Papers (San José: Smith and McKay Printing Co., 1973), 56-78.

[12] Ernesto Galarza, Alviso, Crisis of a Barrio, (San José: Mexican American Community Services Agency, 1973). All other publications regarding Alviso are quite small, often only one page in length. See Jack Douglas, "Alviso: A Window on the Past," San José Historical Museum Association News 14 (January 1994): 6; Arthur M. Fisk, "Alviso," The Trailblazer, Quarterly Bulletin of the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County, vol. 13 (Spring 1973): 1; and "'New Chicago;' An Alviso Dream City Episode," The Trailblazer, Quarterly Bulletin of the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County, vol. 15 (November 1975): 6. The California Room of the San José Public library contains a few unpublished manuscripts regarding Alviso. Works include topics such as the *Jenny Lind* explosion, New Chicago, the ill-fated Watch Factory, and a general overview of Alviso history. See Sherry Tvedt, "New Chicago: Land Promotion in Alviso, 1890-1891," Unpublished Manuscript, California Room, San José Public Library; Lynn Vermillion, "The

The study of Alviso warrants attention for many reasons. It fills a gap in the historiography of the Santa Clara Valley. The existing works on the Valley dismiss its geographical relationship to the shores of San Francisco Bay. The history of Alviso demonstrates that the Santa Clara Valley was not land-locked, but depended on maritime transportation during its initial settlement. This work also contributes to the maritime history of San Francisco Bay. Maritime history of the Bay focus squarely on ocean-going vessels and the large ports that hosted them. Smaller, inter-coastal ports and their role in California's development are often overlooked. Equally significant, this local history illuminates gender and ethnic relationships within a small, cohesive nineteenth-century port society that reflected a larger pattern of these relationships throughout California.

Alviso no longer resembles a great commercial port. Vast salt evaporators have taken over the shoreline of most of the South Bay and the National Wildlife Refuge has reclaimed the marshes and sloughs. Alviso still has the South Bay Yacht Club and boats moored to pilings and docks, but lacks one key ingredient to be a functional port – water. The slough connecting the Guadalupe River to the San Francisco Bay has not been dredged since the

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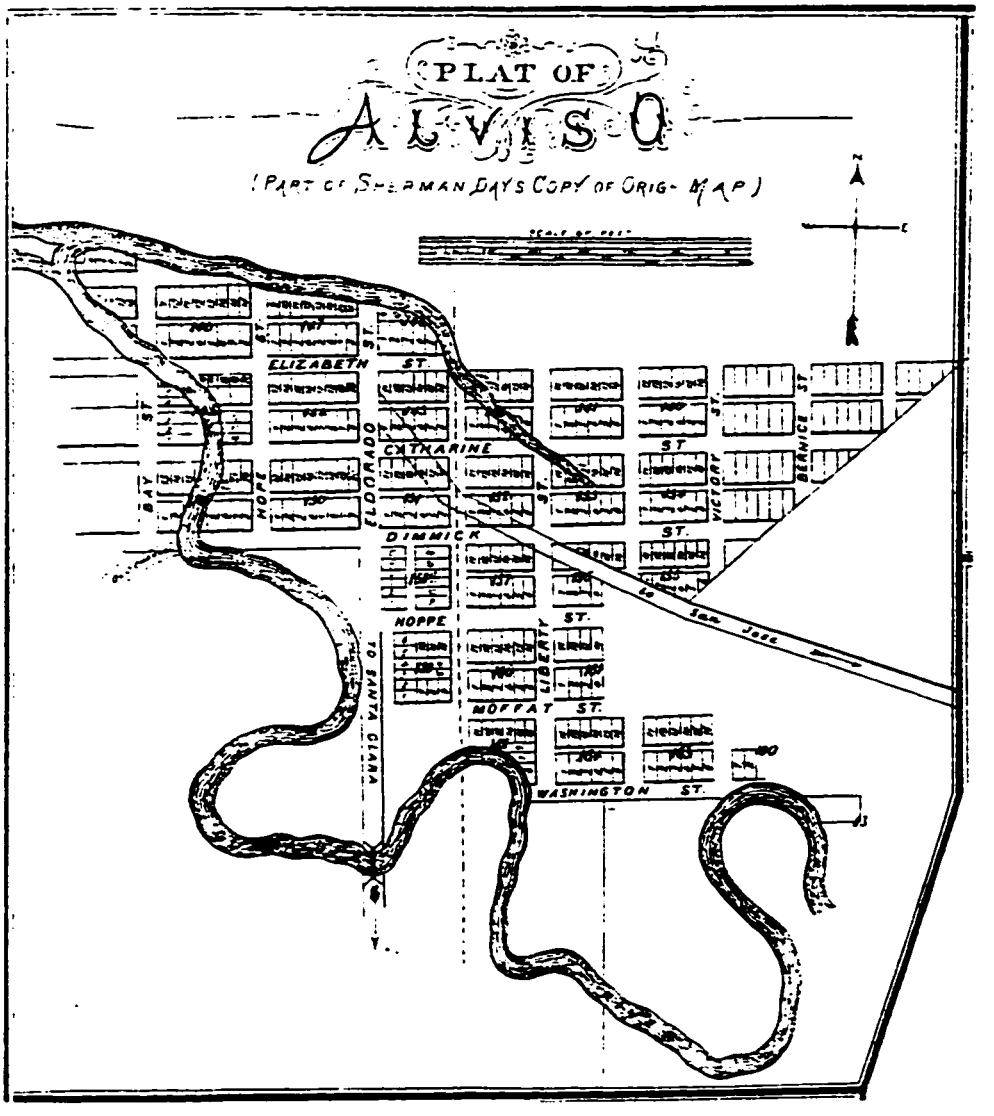
Explosion of the *Jenny Lind*," Unpublished Manuscript, California Room, San José Public Library; Kevin R. Fish, "Seaport to Annexation – and Beyond: Alviso and San José, 1820's - 1980's," Unpublished Manuscript, California Room, San José Public Library; and William R. Machacek, "San José Watch Company," Unpublished Manuscript, California Room, San José Public Library. These manuscripts were written for the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County, Inc., and were authored primarily by amateur historians and/or high school students.

1980s, and the boats remaining in Alviso are mired in silt. This is a tragic end to a once-thriving port town. Today, "the mention of Alviso is . . . a general laugh to dwellers on the San Francisco Peninsula."[13] It was not always so.

[13] Zebroski, 58.

Illustration 2



Source: Thompson and West, Historical Atlas Map of Santa Clara County (San Francisco: Thompson and West, 1876; reprint, San José: Smith & McKay Printing Company, 1973), 20.

The Boom Years

The impetus for the town of Alviso stemmed from two existing elements. The first was the *Embarcadero de Santa Clara.* Located near the terminus of the Guadalupe River into San Francisco Bay, the *Embarcadero*, or landing place, had been used for centuries, first by the Costanoan Indians.[1] They employed the river for a variety of uses, most importantly for transportation and food. They used the tule reeds in the marshland surrounding the estuary for houses, clothing, and the first maritime craft on the Bay, the tule canoe.[2]

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[1] The natives who lived in the Santa Clara Valley were called *Costaños*, or Coast People, by the Spanish explorers. This word was transformed over the years into Costanoan. In recent years, the term Ohlone has gained prominence in referring to the Costanoan people. The two terms are often used interchangeably, but the word Ohlone actually refers to a single tribelet (a sub-group of the larger tribe, with its own dialect and customs, yet still a part of the larger tribal organization) within the Costanoan peoples situated on the San Mateo coast, near Half-Moon Bay. See A. L. Kroeber, Handbook of the Indians in California (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1925), 462; Malcolm Margolin, The Ohlone Way (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1978), 1; Robert F. Heizer, ed., The Costanoan Indians (Cupertino: California Historical Center, 1974), 2.

[2] For a first-hand description of the tule canoe, see Captain George Vancouver, Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World, vol. II (New York: Da Capo Press, 1967), 4-5. A replica was built and tested in 1983 by the Peninsula Conservation Society. See Erin M. Reilly, The Cultural Ecology of the Santa Clara Valley Riparian Zone, Research Manuscript Series on the Cultural and Natural History of Santa Clara, no. 3 (Santa Clara: Santa Clara University, 1994), 30-31.

The Santa Clara Mission, founded in 1777, developed the landing into a busy shipping point.[3] Later that same year, *El Pueblo de San José de Guadalupe* was founded, creating a greater need for supplies shipped by sea. The *Embarcadero* was located less than a mile from the site of the first mission, and less than two miles from the pueblo.[4] If the mission or the pueblo needed supplies, two routes were viable. Carting supplies up the land route (El Camino Real) from Mexico City took several months, but the alternative sea route took considerably less time.[5] In addition to importing supplies, Mission Santa Clara also provided exports. The most important were hides and tallow.[6] The mission also provided the Russian outpost at Fort Ross with its entire supply of wheat.[7]

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[3] For an early account of the exploration of the Guadalupe estuary and subsequent founding of Mission Santa Clara, see Pedro Font, Font's Complete Diary, translated by Herbert Eugene Bolton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1933); Francisco Palou, Historical Memoirs of New California, 4 vols., translated by Herbert Eugene Bolton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1926); and Francisco Palou, Palou's Life of Fray Junipero Serra, 2 vols., translated by Maynard J. Geiger (Washington D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1955). See also Lalla Rookh Boone, "The History of the Santa Clara Valley: Spanish Period" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1922).

[4] The old *Embarcadero de Santa Clara* was located near where Gold Street crosses the Guadalupe River near Highway 237. It is difficult, in 1998, to ascertain the exact location of the *Embarcadero* because both the roads and the river have been altered several times in the twentieth century.

[5] See Arthur Dunning Spearman, The Five Franciscan Churches of Mission Santa Clara, 1777-1825 (Palo Alto: The National Press, 1963).

[6] Richard Henry Dana, Jr. visited the mission at Santa Clara on one such hide and tallow excursion. See Richard Henry Dana, Jr., Two Years Before the Mast (New York: Penguin Books, 1981), 299. See also Magdalen Coughlin, "Boston Smugglers on the Coast (1797-1821): An Insight into the American Acquisition of California," California Historical Society Quarterly 46 (June 1967): 99-120; Adele Ogden, "Hides and Tallow," California Historical Society Quarterly 6 (September 1927): 254-264.

[7] See Sir James Douglas, edited by Herman Leader, "A Voyage from the Columbia to California in 1840," Quarterly of the California Historical Society 8 (June 1929): 97-115; and Frank Gilbert

This trade, though expressly forbidden by the Spanish and later Mexican governments, flourished, and was a major factor in germinating American interest in the Pacific.

The second contributing factor to the founding of Alviso was Ignacio Alviso. Considered the first of his family to enter California, Don Ignacio Alviso was a native of Sonora, Mexico. Born in 1772 to Spanish parents, he was a member of the 1775-76 Anza expedition to San Francisco. Alviso enlisted in the military at the San Francisco Presidio in 1790 and served at the Presidio until he became *Invalido*, or pensioned, in 1819. After serving as an elector in 1827 and in the militia a decade later, he moved to the Santa Clara Valley in 1838 where he received the *Rincon de los Esteros* land grant on February 10th of the same year. Alviso became the Administrator of the Santa Clara Mission during the years 1840-43, though he had been involved with the mission for decades.[8] The town of Alviso was founded within the limits of the *Rincon de los Esteros*.

Don Ignacio Alviso made a great impression on those who came in contact with him. A manuscript covering the years 1815-1822 by Nasario Galindo, resident of Mission Santa Clara, praises Alviso as an intelligent man

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Tremayne, "History of the Santa Clara Valley: The Mexican Period" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1923).

[8] Mildred Brooke Hoover, et al, Historic Spots in California, 3rd ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), 428, 444; Hubert Howe Bancroft, The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft, vol. XIX, History of California, vol. II (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft & Co., 1885), 695. There were two Ignacio Alvisos in Santa Clara County. The other Alviso was a native of California and married Luisa Peralta. He was sixty-five years of age when he visited San José in 1841.

who built all of the houses in Mission Santa Clara.[9] He was a skillful farmer, and used over one hundred self-crafted plows to till the soil of the mission. He supervised all farming at the mission, and kept immaculate and highly detailed records of the crops. Galindo found this surprising, because Alviso was illiterate. "As a last word," writes Galindo, "I say that if these two men [Alviso and Galindo's father] had not had their names immortalized, it would be because there was no one who could have given the knowledge of what they were in those days."[10] Alviso's ranching and farming abilities were widely heralded in the estuary region, for when Beechey arrived in 1826, he noted that "on the whole this is one of the best regulated and most cleanly missions in the country. Its herd of cattle amount to 10,000 in number, and of horses there are about 300."[11]

Alviso was admired and respected by foreigners as well as mission residents. Visitors traveling through the estuary were welcomed and often stayed several days.[12] Chester Lyman, Yale astronomer and surveyor of most of the towns in Santa Clara County (including Alviso), visited Alviso's family and

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[9] Galindo also notes that Señor Alviso married Doña Margarita Bernal, and had extensive military experience at San Francisco, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and San José.

[10] Nasario Galindo, "Early Days at Mission Santa Clara," translated by Cristina Alviso Chapman, California Historical Society Quarterly 38 (June 1959): 101-111,

[11] Frederick W. Beechey, Narrative of a Voyage to the Pacific and Beering's Strait, vol. II (New York: Da Capo Press, 1968), 46.

[12] Dorothea Louise Schmitt, "History of the Santa Clara Valley: The American Period, 1846-1865" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1928), 67.

dined with them on September 27, 1847. He noted that, in addition to his host's famous hospitality, "every thing was in good style & the house well furnished."[13]

Following the secularization of the missions in 1833, the Guadalupe estuary was slowly parceled out by the Mexican Government to influential inhabitants of the Santa Clara Valley. Alviso resided upon the land east of the Guadalupe River near the old *Embarcadero*. On July 27, 1835, he sent a letter that requested "your Excellency to grant to me the place named *Rincon de los Esteros*, according to the accompanying map, bounding with Jose Maria Alviso, Jose Higuera, the *Pueblo de San José Guadalupe* and the Mission of Santa Clara."[14] Alviso's distinguished service as a soldier, settler, and administrator of the mission is reflected by the response of Antonio Pico (future Mexican Governor of California) when he penned that "the land is not irrigable, but subject to the season, having watering-places . . . the petitioner is a Mexican citizen, who has performed many service to the country, and is a retired Sergeant; that the land does not belong to any individual or mission, and it does belong to the common of this pueblo."[15]

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[13] Chester S. Lyman, Around the Horn to the Sandwich Islands and California, 1845-1850, edited by Frederick J. Teggart (Freeport, NY: Books for Library Press, 1971), 241.

[14] "The Alviso Family Papers, 1775-1860." Manuscript, Unpaginated Microfilm, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley. Film C-B 752 vol 1. (Hereafter cited as Alviso Family Papers).

[15] Alviso Family Papers.

Governor Alvarado granted the *Rincon de los Esteros* (translated as the estuary's corner or estuary's bend) to Alviso in 1838. It encompassed 6,352.9 acres spreading eastward from the Guadalupe River to what is now the modern town of Milpitas. An adjacent land grant was given to Barcilia Bernal in 1845, and was located on the old *Embarcadero de Santa Clara*. Translated as St. Clare's Embarcation place, port, or landing, the grant encompassed 196.25 acres along the Guadalupe River. This was a small grant compared to others throughout California. The town of Alviso developed within the limits of these two land grants.[16]

Until the 1840s, the Santa Clara Valley was comprised of Spanish missionaries and settlers, Mexican settlers, and a rapidly declining native Costanoan population. At the onset of 1840 only three adobe buildings were near the estuary: one for the Alviso family, one for the Berryessa family (who had received a portion of the original *Rincon de los Esteros* grant), and one owned by Julio Valencia, who was related to the Alvisos by marriage.[17]

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[16] The United Congress passed an Act on March 3, 1851, to deal with and/or terminate these Mexican land Grants. A three-person panel was appointed to evaluate each of these grants. Over 813 claims were presented to the panel, which included the *Embarcadero de Santa Clara* and the *Rincon de los Esteros*. Ignacio Alviso's *Rincon de los Esteros* was settled between 1862 and 1873 with 2308.17 acres going to Ellen White (widow of Charles White, who initially gained title in 1848), 2200.19 acres to Alviso's descendants, and 1844.54 acres to the Berryessa family. The *Embarcadero de Santa Clara* was mired in litigation until 1936, when title of the land grant was finally given to the deceased Barcilia Bernal. Clyde Arbuckle, Santa Clara County Ranchos (San José: Rosicrucian Press, Ltd., 1968), 17, 27. See also David M. Burnett, "The Origin and the History of Land Grants in Santa Clara County," Papers Read Before the Santa Clara County Historical Society (Santa Clara: Santa Clara County Historical Society, 1911), 30-31.

According to Jan Broek, the beginning of the town of Alviso occurred in 1840 when "a newcomer pitched a canvas warehouse beside the rude landing place [*embarcadero*] on the Guadelupe[sic] Slough."[18] No other written work corroborates this assertion. A study by J.P. Munro-Fraser in 1881 indicates that the first "newcomer" to the estuary region was John Martin. He did not arrive until 1843. The first American settler, Leo Norris, did not arrive until 1847.[19] A study completed in the 1930s asserts that the fourth structure was a canvas warehouse, but this forty-by-sixty-foot structure was erected by A.T. Gallagher in October 1850.[20] Though it is not crucial to know the exact date of the first non-residential structure erected in Alviso, it is important to note that the first non-residential structure was a warehouse located on the Guadalupe River for use in the maritime trade.

The incentive for settlement in the Alviso area was its location at the headwaters of the Guadalupe River. The pattern of settlement was determined by a small number of wealthy land speculators, most of whom were prominent

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[17] J.P. Munro-Fraser, History of Santa Clara County, California (San Francisco: Alley, Bowen & Co., 1881), 244.

[18] Jan Otto Marius Broek. The Santa Clara Valley, California: A Study in Landscape Changes (Utrecht: NVA Oosthoek's Uitgevers Mij., 1932), 71.

[19] Munro-Fraser, 245.

[20] William F. James and George McMurray, The History of San José, California (San José: A.H. Cawston, 1933), 74. Munro-Fraser contends that Gallagher put up his warehouse in October of 1849. Munro-Fraser, 245.

citizens of the Santa Clara Valley. Between 1848 and 1850 they bought, sold, transferred, and ultimately owned most of the land titles in the area.

Charles B. White was the first *Alcalde*, or mayor, of San José. Originally from Missouri, he arrived with his family in California in 1846. Upon Ignacio Alviso's death in 1848, White gained title to roughly 2,300 acres of the *Rincon de los Esteros* Rancho. He attended the Constitutional Convention in Monterey in 1849 to convince the delegates to make San José the capital of the new State of California. White even donated some land and money to assure the success of the venture. Alviso, and to a larger extent White, would greatly benefit from San José as the state capital.[21]

Jacob D. Hoppe, another settler from Missouri, arrived in California in 1846 and became the first Postmaster of San José in 1849. He accompanied White to the Constitutional Convention in Monterey and also joined White in putting up money to lure the capital to San José.[22] Other speculators involved in the purchase and solicitation of Alviso included Kimball H. Dimmick, a judge in the Court of the First Instance and later *Alcalde* of San José in 1849. Two wealthy land holders in the Santa Clara Valley were also involved, Robert B. Neligh and Charles B. Marvin.[23]

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[21] Frederic Hall, The History of San José and Surroundings with Biographical Sketches of Early Settlers (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft and Company, 1871), 202, 206; Hoover et al, 444; Zebroski, 61.

[22] Hall, 363; Zebroski, 61-62.

The most prominent and recognizable figure in the Alviso land speculation was the first Governor of California, Peter H. Burnett. Fleeing debts from both Tennessee and Missouri, this former attorney arrived in California in late 1848. Shortly thereafter he was appointed a judge for the Territory of California and was later elected by his peers as Chief Justice of the Supreme Tribunal in California. He moved to San José from San Francisco in 1849 to gain warmer and more stable weather to benefit his daughter's health. Here he met the other men involved in the Alviso land scheme and became a partner.[24]

Several items of note bound these men together. First, most of them came from the Midwest, primarily from Missouri. As such, they may have had experience in property sales, but none in maritime commerce. Second, most came to follow the lure of gold. Burnett left a judgeship in Oregon to become an agent for John Sutter. Hoppe had also spent time in the gold fields near the American River.[25] These men did not come to California to relocate, they came to get rich. They were speculators first and foremost. Third, all were prominent citizens of San José, not the town of Alviso. They invested in Alviso to increase their wealth.

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[23] Curtis, "Alviso, California," 52; Munro-Fraser, 246; Zebroski, 64. Schmitt, 58.

[24] Peter H. Burnett, Recollections and Opinions of an Old Pioneer (New York: Appleton and Co., 1880), 287; Hall, 351-353.

[25] Peter H. Burnett, Recollections and Opinions of an Old Pioneer, 287; Zebroski, 62, 64.

The method of gaining title to these lands was quick and systematic. Ignacio Alviso's Rancho was divided into three separate tracts upon his death in 1848. Charles White owned one of these tracts of land. The tract owned by the Berryessa family was signed over to Jacob Hoppe and Charles Marvin. It was not an outright purchase, however, for the Berryessas only granted Hoppe and Marvin the right to prepare lots and sell them. In return, the Berryessa family received one dollar plus fifty percent of any property sales.[26]

The *Embarcadero de Santa Clara* Rancho was also deeded to Hoppe and Marvin by Barcilia Bernal Martin, who had married John Martin shortly after his arrival. The conditions of the deed were similar to the Berryessa deal. These transactions were carried out between August 1848 and August 1849.[27] Peter Burnett would later gain control of Marvin's portion of the property in both land transactions due to Marvin's poor health. One scholar of Alviso, Margaret Zebroski, asserts that Burnett was ridden with debt and that his contribution to the land scheme was his legal and political connections rather than monetary contributions.[28] Thus, by the end of 1849, Charles White, Jacob Hoppe, and Peter Burnett owned almost the entire Guadalupe estuary.

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[26] For the title transfer of land from Ignacio Alviso to Charles White see Santa Clara County Record of Deeds, Book 2, 172. For the title transfer of the Berryessa tract to Hoppe and Martin see Santa Clara County Record of Deeds, Book 5, 172. See also Zebroski, 63

[27] For the *Embarcadero de Santa Clara* title transfer see Santa Clara County Record of Deeds, Book 5, 170. See also Zebroski, 63.

[28] Zebroski, 64.

The men were sure that Alviso was prepared both residentially and commercially for settlement. They were so confident that they put a large advertisement in the Alta California that spoke of a place that "possesses advantages of a nature so positive and apparent that a brief description must satisfy every one of the certainty of its becoming, ere long, a town of the highest importance."[29] The river was navigable year-round and vessels drawing up to twelve feet could use Alviso's wharves. The Santa Clara Valley "require[s] a commercial town at this point - the only one where such a town can be located."[30] Contracts were prepared for "the erection of warehouses and buildings, and a substantial bridge is now being erected, connecting the two portions of town."[31] The advertisement further announced that lots were now available for inspection, having been surveyed and laid out by C.S. Lyman. Furthermore, the lots would not be disputed, for "the title is perfect and indisputable, having been derived directly from the Mexican Government, to persons who have since resided on the premises for nearly twelve years."[32] The speculators were sure that Alviso was destined for greatness.

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[29] Alta California, 13 September 1849, 6.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

Though property sales in Alviso at mid-century were initially lucrative, the land on which Alviso sat was less than ideal for large-scale settlement. The poor estuarial conditions persisted.[33] The advertisement in the Alta California promised a great port town unrivaled in the South Bay "with pure water; free from inundations at all seasons."[34] This local advertisement was reproduced nationally by E. Gould Buffum, Lieutenant of the First Regiment in the New York Volunteers. After spending three years in California, he published a journal in which he declared "the want of a great commercial town at the head of the great bay of San Francisco has been supplied by the location of [Alviso]."[35] Closer examination, however, indicates that Buffum may never have visited the town. His description of Alviso is almost identical in wording to the advertisement in the Alta California newspaper. The book was widely distributed, notifying the nation that Alviso was a great place to work, live, and, more importantly, make money.

Those who did visit Alviso had a different view of the area. Robert de Massey, a Frenchman who came to California seeking gold, arrived at "Port San José" in September of 1850.[36] Upon landing at Alviso, he observed "an embryo

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[33] The first explorers, including Fages, Palou, Moraga, and Vancouver, all lamented the conditions of the estuary in their respective journals.

[34] Ibid.

[35] E. Gould Buffum, Six Months in the Gold Mines: From a Journal of Three Years' Residence in Upper and Lower California, 1847-8-9 (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1850), 14.

[36] Alviso was often called the Port of San José or San José's Waterfront, even by those who had lived in the Santa Clara Valley for years. See Ernest de Massey, "A Frenchman in the Gold Rush," translated by Marguerite Eyer Wilbur, California Historical Society Quarterly V (September

village that had been laid out on the marshy, unhealthful lowlands."[37] Another traveler to the region, William Kelly, commented that "green verdure of wild oats and barley decked the mountains to their summits, and dark ravines, wooded with fine timber, intersected their sides" in the Santa Clara Valley. When arriving in Alviso in 1849-50, however, he noted that "the *embarcadero* is low, and covered with *tule*, scarcely furnishing a patch of pasture the entire way."[38] Alviso's asset was also its calamity. The marshy sloughs allowed unfettered access for year-round shipping, but made the surrounding landscape inhospitable for human habitation or agriculture.

Within a few years after the arrival of new settlers and commercial ventures, Alviso had become a bustling port town. The rapidity of settlement prompted the speculators to gain title to even more land. Instead of striking a deal for a percentage of the future land sales, however, an outright purchase was demanded by the current land owners. Land on the north side of the Guadalupe River owned by James Alexander Forbes was sold to Hoppe and Burnett in January 1850 for $10,000. Over the next year, Hoppe, Burnett, Neligh, and Dimmick bought and sold tracts of land with regularity.[39]

1926): 353; and Mary Bowden Carroll, Ten Years in Paradise (San José: Popp & Hogan, 1903), 117.

[37] De Massey, 353.

[38] William Kelly, A Stroll Through the Diggings of California (Oakland: Biobooks, 1950), 178. Italics in original.

[39] See Santa Clara County Record of Deeds, Book A, 196. See also Zebroski, 66-67; Munro-Fraser, 249.

When the speculators arrived in 1847, scarcely any buildings stood in Alviso, and no commercial enterprises existed. By 1851 the town had become a thriving port society. Information collected by Munro-Fraser for his History of Santa Clara County shows a dramatic increase in commercial structures. The most telling sign of Alviso's economic prosperity was in the number of wharves and warehouses within the town limits. There were no fewer than six warehouses along the Guadalupe River. These were owned by A.T. Gallagher; Barrows and Ricketts; Clark, Rand, and Snyder; Flenoy and Pierce; Captain Ham; and one built for the sole purpose of holding stores of quicksilver until shipment. Three embarkation points existed in 1851: a landing owned by Merrill, a wharf operated by Whitmore Brothers (owners of the *New Star*), and another wharf owned by Hutchison and Wilson.[40]

Apart from the shipping industry, the new residents of Alviso were supported by three stores, a mercantile establishment, two hotels, a hostelry, a blacksmith's workshop, and a tavern.[41] Meanwhile, speculators sold residential lots at a reasonable pace in addition to the commercial lots. In November of 1849, the State Constitution was adopted and San José became the first state capital.[42] White and Hoppe had succeeded in luring the capital within their land

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[40] The first names of the owners could not be located. Munro-Fraser, 249.

[41] Ibid., 248-49.

[42] Thompson and West, Historical Atlas Map of Santa Clara County (San Francisco: Thompson and West, 1876; reprint, San José: Smith & McKay Printing Company, 1973), 11.

holdings. Adding to this speculative triumph was the election of Burnett as the first Governor of California. His hope for the future of the town was demonstrated by the fact that he built an imposing two-story structure as his home in December 1850 on his property in Alviso.[43]

The historical record reveals several architectural and cultural omissions in the bustling new town. There is no indication of a livery stable for use in the stage connections to San José. Likewise, no blacksmith, saddler, or wagonmaker facilities existed at this time. Though Chester Lyman surveyed and laid out a central plaza, no official town buildings (such as a general meeting house or town hall) were built by 1850. Alviso also lacked a clothier, banker, tailor, shoemaker, physician, or attorney.[44]

Though several commercial and residential establishments existed at this time, one glaring omission was conspicuous – there was no church or any other religious building in Alviso. Indeed, a secret society was established thirteen years before any church was built in Alviso. By 1881, "it [Alviso] has no church - it never had any - but its only secret society is in a most prosperous condition."[45]

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[43] Burnett's home was two stories high, twenty-nine by forty-eight feet in dimension, and held ten or twelve rooms. His thoughts on the future of Alviso are apparent when Burnett moved his house from Alviso to San José, board by board, in 1854. The speculative nature of the entire valley is illustrated by the real estate prices, to which Burnett fell victim. The home that was moved from Alviso to San Jose cost him six thousand dollars, but sold for only one thousand. His second home was built for ten thousand dollars, but sold for only two thousand. See Peter H. Burnett, Recollections and Opinions of an Old Pioneer, 397-98.

[44] Broek, 94.

[45] Munro-Fraser, 251.

Alviso's first church was not built until 1893, when the Alviso Methodist Episcopal Church was incorporated and built upon land purchased in the New Chicago land scheme.[46] Alviso was becoming a stereotypical port town: two hotels, a hostelry, a tavern, and no church.

By 1850, Alviso had well over a dozen commercial establishments. The lots laid out by Chester Lyman in 1849 sold at a steady pace, but far less quickly than the speculators would have liked.[47] The lots were laid out in a traditional grid pattern with streets running north-south and east-west. The speculative founders sought to immortalize their venture by naming streets after themselves and their wives.[48]

Several factors inhibited early settlement. First and foremost was the fact that the Guadalupe River repeatedly flooded the area. In December of 1849 the Alta California reported that "the rivers and streams in every direction are running over their banks, and the Guadalupe has reached within half-a-dozen rods of the

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[46] City of San José Memorandum, 21 February 1990. Letter to the Historic Landmarks Commission recommending the removal of the Church building from the San José Historic Resources Inventory after a fire destroyed the building.

[47] Lyman, 299-306. It seems that Lyman also joined in the speculation of Alviso. On January 26, 1850, Lyman penned that he "arranged with the Governor [Burnett] respecting my 1/10th of Alviso." Little else is known about Lyman's role in the land scheme, except that he attempted to collect 1500 dollars from a Dr. McKee for "his purchase in Alviso." It is not known whether Lyman was collecting for one of the partners or if he himself had sold the property to Dr. McKee. Perhaps Lyman was granted a stake in Alviso in remuneration for his work on the surveying of the town.

[48] Hoppe, Dimmick, Catherine, and Elizabeth Streets ran the north-south direction. Their hope for the town was emulated in the naming of the east-west streets: Bay, Hope, El Dorado, and Liberty. Munro-Fraser, 288.

houses in San José. . . . We are literally pent in and rumor is current the *embarcadero* or Alviso . . . is more than a foot under water."[49] In 1851, Charles Wade reportedly located a seven-pound salmon swimming in the middle of the street which was covered with up to two feet of water from the flooding Guadalupe River.[50]

The high cost of land and materials also inhibited early settlement. Land initially sold at six hundred dollars for a fifty-by-one-hundred-foot lot.[51] In the 1850s everything, including food, supplies, and transportation, was at a premium price due to the abundance of capital coming out of the mines and the speculation of those exploiting the gold seekers. Lumber prices fluctuated between 250 and 700 dollars per thousand board-feet.[52] This did not include freight and/or shipping charges. Moreover, logging in California had not reached its prime, and most lumber was being shipped from the eastern United States.[53] Labor was also expensive, often costing sixteen dollars a day.[54] In some

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[49] Alta California, 29 December 1849, 2.

[50] Austen D. Warburton, Santa Clara Sagas, edited by Mary Jo Ignoffo, Local History Studies, Vol. 36 (Cupertino: California History Center & Foundation, 1996), 24.

[51] Munro-Fraser, 246.

[52] In 1849, A.T. Gallagher paid six hundred dollars per thousand board-feet. See Munro-Fraser, 245.

[53] Burnett lauds his "best eastern pine lumber" when speaking of his house in Alviso. See Peter H. Burnett, Recollections and Opinions of an Old Pioneer, 397.

[54] Broek, 90.

instances, it was cheaper to purchase a pre-fabricated home in the eastern United States and ship it by sea around Cape Horn to California. Harry Wade, prominent citizen of Alviso during the nineteenth century, did just that, bringing his home to Alviso in 1855.[55]

Uncertainties over legal title to the land in the Alviso area (and throughout California) also deterred settlement. As a condition of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, ending the war between Mexico and the United States, all land grants bestowed by the Mexican government would be confirmed by the United States upon proper documentation by the land holder or his successor. American land speculators, such as Hoppe and Dimmick, purchased these land grants in hope of a great real estate boom. What occurred, however, was that these speculators bought and sold so frequently, that the boundaries of the Ranchos and subsequent lots blurred, thus miring legal title in court battles for years, even decades. Settlers were hesitant to purchase land which could potentially prove to be a Mexican land grant and not public land.[56]

A final inhibitor to settlement in the area was a statewide recession during the 1850s. After the initial gold "rush" ended, the pace of migration to California

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[55] Santa Clara County Historical Heritage Commission, Santa Clara County Historical Resource Inventory (San José: Santa Clara County Historical Heritage Commission, 1979), 39: Phyllis Filiberti Butler, The Valley of Santa Clara: Historic Buildings, 1792-1920 (San José: The Junior League of San José, Inc., 1975), 63.

[56] Thompson and West, 11 1/2. Note: the pagination of Thompson and West's Historical Atlas Map of Santa Clara County is by one-half increments. Thus, the pagination reads 1, 1 1/2, 2, 2 1/2, and so on.

slowed. Speculators were caught holding land that could not be sold. The gold rush made few rich; most miners went home with less than what they came with. The Alta California speaks of such issues in April 1850: "Real Estate is very dull; no disposition for investment. The Spirit of Speculation so prevalent a few months since, seems to have entirely subsided. The most valuable property has depreciated on account of the stagnation in general business affairs."[57]

Nevertheless, settlement continued, and by 1852 the Township of Alviso was incorporated.[58] The limits of the town, as set forth by Section Two of the Town Charter, were defined as:

> . . . all the lands embraced within the limits of the several tracts of land conveyed by Berryessa and wife and by John Martin and wife to Charles B. [Marvin] and Jacob D. Hoppe, Peter H. Burnett, R.B. [Neligh] and Jacob D. Hoppe all the deeds for which are recorded in Santa Clara County.[59]

The area of the town exceeded fourteen square miles.[60] Though civic pride may have played a part in the incorporation, the primary purpose was to reap the benefits of the booming maritime industries in the town. Section Three of the Town Charter stated that "the Board of Trustees of the Town of Alviso shall have power to levy and collect a wharfage tax upon all vessels trading there not to

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[57] Alta California, 1 April 1850, 4.

[58] Alviso was the third town in California to incorporate.

[59] California Statutes 1852, 222. See also Santa Clara County Record of Deeds, Books 2, 5, and A.

[60] Curtis, "Alviso, California," 63.

exceed 15¢ per ton."[61] Alviso was first and foremost a maritime community in 1852. Its survival depended upon the success of this industry.

[61] California Statutes 1852, 222.

Illustration 3

Source: Photographic Collection, "Schooner *Portia*" B1.9,246, San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park.

Live by Sail - Die by Rail

The purpose for founding Alviso was the transportation and shipment of cargo and people into the Santa Clara Valley. Though sailing vessels had called on the *Embarcadero* for years, the first steamship to ply the slough connecting San Francisco Bay and the Guadalupe River was the 37-foot *Sitka*. Owned by William Leidesdorff, it arrived in Alviso on November 14, 1847.[1] Shortly thereafter the *Meteor* arrived.[2] By 1849 regularly scheduled steamer service between Alviso and San Francisco was in place. This ship, the *Sacramento*, was not a steamer by design, states Munro-Fraser, but rather "an engine and machinery . . . placed in an old scow."[3] The *Sacramento* took ten hours or more to cover the distance between the two ports and cost $40 for the trip. An extra $10 covered stage service to San José from Alviso.[4]

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[1] The *Sitka* was not the fastest mode of transportation in the San Francisco Bay Area. Apparently the *Sitka* and an ox-team left New Helvetia (on the Sacramento River) at the same time, each heading towards Benicia; the ox-team arrived four days ahead of the *Sitka*. See Jerry MacMullen, Paddle-wheel Days in California (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1944), 4.

[2] James and McMurray, 74.

[3] Munro-Fraser, 246. A scow is a large flat-bottomed boat that has a shallow draft. This configuration allow the scow to haul large quantities of goods while remaining high in the water. As the sloughs approaching Alviso could only accommodate boats with drafts up to twelve feet, the scows were indispensable for shipping cargo from Alviso to San Francisco. See Peter Kemp, ed., The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 762.

[4] Ibid.

By 1850 the *Firefly* joined the route, with the *Wm. Robinson* and the *New Star* joining shortly thereafter.[5] The following year two more steamers plied the route along the San Francisco Bay. The *Boston* shortened the time it took to reach Alviso when it steamed along a route that proved to be an alternative to the Guadalupe Slough.[6] The first regularly scheduled steamer to utilize this route, now dubbed the Steamboat Slough, was the *Jenny Lind.*[7] Alviso was developing into a successful commercial shipping point for the whole of the South Bay.

Then disaster struck. The *Jenny Lind* had been transporting passengers between San Francisco and Alviso for more than two years when, on April 11, 1853, an accident killed thirty people. At about 12:30 P.M. the *Jenny Lind* was opposite the *Pulgas* Rancho near Redwood City when the boiler exploded directly into the cabin where several people had just sat down to dine for the evening. When the Alta California ran the story the next day, eighteen people had already died.[8] The newspaper speculated that "had the explosion happened but five minutes previous it is said that not a soul would have been injured as the cabin was empty."[9] At first, a passenger list was difficult to re-create, for only

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[5] Hall, 237; Munro-Fraser 247.

[6] Accidentally discovered by a visiting Chilean and his sloop *Salodonia*, this new route was faster and shorter than the old route to Alviso. See Munro-Fraser, 247.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Alta California, 12 April 1853, 2.

those riders who booked passage directly from Alviso were listed on the manifest. Those who arrived in Alviso via stage from San José were not listed.

As the details emerged, the Alta California announced that the failure of the steam chimney iron caused the explosion. This portion of the boiler was responsible for cooling the steam from the boiler before it left the ship. The engineer in charge of the steamer, twenty-nine-year-old W.H. Travis, was quite defensive during his post-accident testimony, perhaps due to his inexperience as an engineer.[10] Travis asserted that the accident was due to "poor iron in the steam chimney," and not due to any fault of his own.[11]

Travis testified that there was nothing unusual about the trip. The *Jenny Lind* was traveling at ten miles per hour running on forty pounds of pressure in the steam boiler. The ship normally ran at around forty to forty-five pounds of pressure up to a maximum of fifty pounds, so this accident was not attributed to overworking the boiler. In fact, the *Jenny Lind* had just completed an engine overhaul in 1851 and was cleared to operate at any speed, providing it was attained with fifty pounds or less of pressure in the boiler. This certificate of operation expired in May of 1851.

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Alta California, 14 April 1853, 3. He had, however, worked on this type of boiler for over ten years.

[11] Ibid.

After the explosion, several steamers were sent immediately to the site to offer aid. The injured were placed in San Francisco hotels, and the *Goliah* towed the *Jenny Lind* to the San Francisco waterfront. Little damage, apart from the cabin, was sustained by the *Jenny Lind*. Unfortunately, that is where most of the passengers were when the fateful explosion occurred.[12] The final analysis of the accident coincided with the engineer's assertion that the ruptured steam flue was caused by "the defective state of iron, its insecurity in wanting the necessary stay bolts, or in the unusual pressure of steam thereon at the time."[13]

The tragedy of the explosion lay in the loss of life, and the deceased included two of the founders of Alviso: J.D. Hoppe and Charles White.[14] Not only did the water transportation industries in Alviso take a public relations nose-dive, but two of the original founders of Alviso, who still had interests and grand hopes for the future of the town, were dead. Though transportation of raw and manufactured goods continued, the transportation of passengers suffered. A sense of mourning descended upon the entire San Francisco Bay area. The Alta California articulated the mood: "the disaster on the bay has smote with appalling suddenness the hearts of our community. The distressing circumstances of the accident, the terrible effects, and the familiarity with most of

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[12] Alta California, 13 April 1853, 2.

[13] Alta California, 18 April 1853, 2.

[14] For a complete listing of the fatalities aboard the *Jenny Lind*, see Appendix A. Alta California, 13 April 1853, 2; The Pioneer, 29 September 1877, 1.

the names in the list of sufferers, have caused a deep impression among our citizens."[15]

Despite the dark shadow that the *Jenny Lind* cast upon the San Francisco-Alviso route, shipping continued to prosper in the South Bay. The two most important industries in Alviso during this period were the wharves and warehouses along the Guadalupe River. Alviso was the recipient of both the increased production of Santa Clara County commodities and the falling shipping prices after the gold rush. As the Santa Clara Valley began to develop and produce commodities for markets as close as San Francisco and as far away as Spain in the 1850s and early 1860s, Alviso was the sole maritime transportation hub for the South Bay.

Several shipping lines called on Alviso during the 1850s. S.C. Merrill had operated a landing near Alviso since 1851. It was not a well developed landing, for there was no wharf or warehouse, and Merrill himself lived in a ship's galley.[16] By 1853 Merrill owned and operated a wharf, a warehouse, and a new "safe commodious and fast running steamer" dubbed the *Express*.[17] The *Express* departed from the Long Wharf in San Francisco every Monday, Wednesday, and

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[15] Alta California, 12 April 1853, 2. Today, the *Jenny Lind* is still used as an example of the early maritime disasters associated with the California gold rush. See James P. Delgado, To California by Sea: A Maritime History of the California Gold Rush (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), 151-51, 162.

[16] Munro-Fraser, 249.

[17] Santa Clara Register, 2 June 1853, 3.

Friday for Alviso. It steamed from Alviso every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Merrill also arranged stage connections for passengers to reach San José.[18]

Another major shipping enterprise in Alviso was a packet line owned and operated by the West family.[19] In 1853 West's line offered service to and from Alviso twice a week on two schooners, the fifty-ton *Webster*, and the thirty-ton *Ensign*.[20] Operated by T.J. West in Alviso and John West in San Francisco, this line offered "the cheapest" prices and a "warehouse and vessels being superior to any others at Alviso."[21] By 1857 West's line appears to have dominated shipping out of Alviso. It regularly placed large advertisements offering "faithful and prompt attention given to all business entrusted to this line."[22] The warehouse was built alongside the wharf and was one of the largest in Alviso. The regularity of the shipping line increased to three times a week that year.

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[18] Ibid.

[19] A packet is a shortened name for packet-boat, which was designed to carry mail between two ports but was also an excellent ship for the transportation of goods and passengers. The term packet in the 1850s denoted any small, fast sailing ship used for cargo transportation along short routes between coastal destinations. See Kemp, ed., 625.

[20] San José Semi-Weekly Tribune, 11 July 1854, 3. A schooner is often a two-masted vessel with the mainmast taller than the foremast. However, three-, four-, five-, and even seven-masted schooners have been built. They were built primarily for coastal trade and rigged with fore-and-aft sails on the masts. See Kemp, ed., 759.

[21] Ibid.

[22] San José Telegraph, 4 September 1857, 3.

The steamboat *Guadaloupe* also ran the San Francisco-Alviso route three times a week in 1854.[23] This line also appears to have been one of the major industries in Alviso. Captain Thomas R. Hope, the proprietor of the line, advertised a rate reduction to $2.00 for a one-way trip from San Francisco to San José, including stage travel from Alviso to San José. Captain Hope also notified the public that "the splendid steamer *Sophie* is nearly ready to be put on the route, and in a few days a DAILY LINE will be formed by the two above boats."[24]

This idea of two steamers running daily from Alviso to San Francisco brought talk of a monopoly among those who relied on the shipment of goods via Alviso. An advertisement in August of 1854 expounded, "Down with Monopoly and Combination Steamers !!"[25] Those operating the slower sailboats lowered their cost for passage via Alviso to only $1.00, and provided seven sloops for transportation from San José to San Francisco.[26] The tongue-in-cheek advertisement continued,

> Taking passengers . . . and freight $1 LESS
> THAN STEAMER RATES.
> No $1 1/2 for a (50 cent) dinner to pay.
> A clear $4 more saved on the passage this way.
> And no walking on *narrow tilting planks*, one-half
> mile or more,
> O'er stinking flats to reach an out (of-the-way

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[23] San José Semi-Weekly Tribune, 14 July 1854, 3. The name of the vessel had several different variations of the spelling, including *Guadalupe*.

[24] San José Semi-Weekly Tribune, 1 September 1854, 2. Capital letters in original.

[25] San José Semi-Weekly Tribune, 15 August 1854, 3.

[26] A sloop is a single-masted sailing vessel which is fore-and-aft rigged. See Kemp, ed., 809.

Ware) house door.
In fact, 'tis only a pleasant four hours' sail to
go up
On these Boats, and no *boilers* on board to
blow up![27]

The owners and agents of the *Guadalupe* and the *Sophie* were sensitive to the charge of monopoly and countered a few weeks later,

> Notice to Farmers
>
> It having been reported by parties interested in carrying freight, that the low price which the steamer is charging is intended to run off the vessels plying on the Bay, and then raise the price -
> The subscriber hereby gives notice that he is ready to contract for Freight to San Francisco, THROUGH THE SEASON, at $2.50 per ton for heavy freight, and *No Warehouse Charges for Thirty Days.*[28]

This announcement attempted to establish a set price for the season. Thus, competing sail lines could match or beat the steamer prices without fear of a continual price war.

Additional carriers tried to compete with steamers and packets operated by the larger lines. By 1855, the steamer *Union* contracted with the Eureka warehouse in Alviso to ship three times a week.[29] The fare was $3.00 one way for travel from the Long Wharf in San Francisco to either San José or Santa

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[27] San José Semi-Weekly Tribune, 15 August 1854, 3. Format, capital letters, and italics in original.

[28] San José Semi-Weekly Tribune, 1 September 1854, 2. Format, capital letters, and italics in original.

[29] San José Semi-Weekly Tribune, 1 May 1855, 3.

Clara. Three years later a new line opened. Two schooners, the *Christiana* and the *Louisa Harker*, contracted with the Union Warehouse and wharf in Alviso. The owners, P.M. Augier and John Ortley, were touted as "amongst the earliest who commenced to run on this route, and all orders and commissions entrusted to them will be faithfully and economically performed."[30] John Ortley was one of the few who owned and operated a boat on the San Francisco-Alviso route who actualiy resided in Alviso.

Stage connections from Alviso also contributed to the success of the port. In order to survive, each shipping line had to own or have an arrangement with a stage company in order to move passengers out of Alviso. According to H.C. Ward, one of the pioneering stage drivers in California, "the first Stageing in this part of California was done by Jhon[sic] Whistman and was run betwene[sic] San Francisco and San José in the fall of 1849."[31] This venture soon failed, for there were no roads between the two towns and a small amount of rain made the country impassable. Whistman then restructured his line, to the delight of Alviso residents, to run from the docks of Alviso to destinations south, including Santa Clara, San José, Santa Cruz, and Monterey. The passenger fare was initially

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[30] San José Telegraph, 27 January 1858, 3.

[31] H.C. Ward, "Stage-Coach Days in California," edited by Oscar Osburn Winther, California Historical Society Quarterly 13 (September 1934): 256.

$35.00 for both steamer and stage. Later the cost was reduced to $32.00, or two ounces of gold dust. By 1851 the fare was further reduced to $10.00.[32]

The stage line from Alviso to San José was not an easy journey. According to one observer, "passengers never failed to have a little pedestrian exercise."[33] Talk of a turnpike road between Alviso and San José surfaced in 1860, and a grand road much like The Alameda connecting Santa Clara and San José was planned.[34] One reason for this venture, apart from convenience of a road which would not become mired in mud at the first hint of rain, came from word that goods shipped to the Central Valley of California were going via Stockton, thereby bypassing Alviso. The citizens of San José and Alviso feared that the impassable roads contributed to this drop in shipping, and were willing to "submit to an addition of a few cents, on the hundred dollars, for the improvement of our principal country road, than to lose the traffic with the southern counties."[35] The development of a new road to facilitate trade between Alviso and San José was imperative.

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[32] Ward, 256. See also Alta California, 1 October 1851.

[33] Hall, 237.

[34] The Alameda was the road connecting Mission Santa Clara and Pueblo de San José. It was about two miles long and had trees planted on either side of the road by the early Spanish Missionaries. See Spearman, The Five Franciscan Churches of Mission Santa Clara. See also the San José Tribune, 26 October 1860, 2.

[35] See Stockton Argus, quoted in the San José Tribune, 2 March 1860, 2.

There were two proposed routes to San José: a direct route from Alviso connecting with First Street in San José, or a longer road from Alviso via Santa Clara and The Alameda.[36] San Joséans preferred the direct route, while Santa Clarans preferred the longer route through its city. The Alvisans did not have a preference, for they would obtain a connecting road no matter which route was chosen. The direct route eventually won the contest, partially due to its lower cost.[37] The road was built in 1861 and the new San José and Alviso Turnpike Company erected toll gates to defray the construction costs. By 1863, the county had purchased the road for $5,000 and declared it a public road, free of toll charges.[38]

The shipping and stage lines tell only part of the story, for their success was directly related to the production of commodities in Santa Clara Valley. During the mission days, the Embarcadero shipped the hides and tallow sought by Boston merchants. At the beginning of American settlement, Alviso was important because it imported all materials needed to sustain agricultural and stock settlement in the valley. Building materials, clothing, farming and mining

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[36] San José Tribune, 2 March 1860, 2; San José Tribune, 26 October 1860, 2.

[37] The cost of the direct route was estimated at $20,000, while the Santa Clara route was estimated at $30,000. See San José Tribune, 26 October 1860, 2.

[38] Horace S. Foote, ed., Pen Pictures from the Garden of the World (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1888), 121

materials, and especially people were shuttled through the port. Alviso gained new importance when the Santa Clara Valley began exporting materials.

The first significant export of the area was quicksilver. Also known as cinnabar, quicksilver is a bright red mineral. It is a mercuric sulfide composed of 76 percent mercury and 14 percent sulfur and is the only common material from which mercury is recovered.[39] The quicksilver was extracted at the New Almaden mine (and others) in the Capitancillos Hills of the Santa Cruz mountains, about twenty miles south of Alviso. Quicksilver was known to the Indians of the Santa Cruz Mountains, who adorned themselves with the red toxic material. Castillero, a Spanish officer, initially laid claim to the mines, but lost control of them. Eventually, they ended up in the hands of the Quicksilver Mining Company.[40]

The New Almaden mine produced the greatest amount of quicksilver anywhere in the world. Quicksilver was almost as precious as gold in nineteenth-century California. One author notes that "the discovery of gold in California in 1848 . . . created a huge demand for mercury to be used for the purification of the precious metal by amalgamation."[41] As the gold rush progressed, so did the rush to mine quicksilver. After the ore was extracted from

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[39] Jimmie Schneider, Quicksilver: The Complete History of Santa Clara County's New Almaden Mine (San José: Zella Schneider, 1992), 163.

[40] Thompson and West, 14.

[41] Leonard J. Goldwater, Mercury: A History of Quicksilver (Baltimore: York Press, 1972), 48.

the earth, a refinement process extracted the quicksilver. It was then poured into twenty-five-pound iron flasks imported from Spain and England; each flask held seventy-six and one-half pounds of mercury. The filling process was arduous, for the flasks were filled with an ordinary funnel. These flasks were then loaded upon ox-carts and hauled to Alviso, for shipping.[42]

The amount of quicksilver shipped from Alviso was staggering. No records are extant prior to 1850, but in this year 23,875 flasks were produced at the New Almaden mine alone. The annual value of quicksilver exceeded four million dollars by 1864.[43] In 1865, 47,194 flasks were produced. Production by 1885 remained steady at 21,400 flasks. The importance of the New Almaden mine cannot be overstated. In 1880, the New Almaden Mine produced 23,465 flasks, while all other mines in California produced a combined 36,461 flasks. By 1882, the New Almaden produced 28,070 flasks, while all other mines in California combined dropped to 24,662 flasks. In 1885, while the New Almaden produced 21,400 flasks, all other California mines combined to produce only 10,673 flasks.[44]

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[42] Milton Lanyond and Laurence Bulmore, Cinnabar Hills: The Quicksilver Days of New Almaden (Los Gatos: Village Printers, 1967), 14; Thompson and West, 14. Schmitt, 159; Curtis, "Alviso, California," 57. Areas such as Mexico, South America, England, China, and Spain wanted the quicksilver for the manufacturing of vermilion and other commercial products.

[43] "West's Shipping Once Centered About Alviso," San José Mercury Herald, 90th Anniversary Edition, 20 June 1941, unpaginated.

[44] Thompson and West, 14; Schneider, 149, 159.

The New Almaden mine led the world in quicksilver production. By 1885, this mine alone produced over 50 percent of California's quicksilver, and the state accounted for 70 percent of the United States' quicksilver production between 1850 and 1961.[45] Alviso benefited from such success, for even after the railroads provided faster service to San Francisco and other ports of call, shipping the heavy quicksilver out of Alviso was still the transportation medium of choice.

By 1861, four shipping lines operated from Alviso, one steam line and three sailing lines.[46] The significance of Alviso was recognized in 1862, when Congress made it an official port of entry due to its extensive lumber, grain, and hay shipments.[47] That same year, three of these four lines regularly advertised their services in the local newspapers. The Union Line of Packets operated three schooners which departed three times a week from Alviso. It also boasted the largest "Fire Proof Warehouse" in Alviso.[48] West's Line of Packets was still operating, offering two schooners and a sloop three times a week from Alviso.[49] Meanwhile, daily service (Sundays excluded) was offered to passengers on the steamer *Sophie McLane* between Alviso and San Francisco. The fare was $2.00

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[45] Goldwater, 48.

[46] James and McMurry, 104.

[47] Ibid., 113.

[48] San José Daily Mercury, 15 May 1862, 4.

[49] Ibid.

each way.[50] Alviso's hold upon the Santa Clara Valley as the only shipping point remained strong because no railroads, as of yet, had made their way to San José. This quickly changed.

The desire for a railroad linking San Francisco and Santa Clara County existed as early as 1849, when the first state legislature had considered such an idea. A public meeting was held on January 25, 1851, and the Pacific and Atlantic Railroad was incorporated on September 6 of the same year. Enthusiasm for the railroad was based upon the amount of passenger and cargo traffic between San Francisco and San José. In 1855, an estimated 150 persons per day, or 54,750 per annum utilized two steamboats and numerous stage lines. The San José Semi-Weekly Tribune estimated that 20,000 tons of grain, 5,000 tons of fruits and vegetables, and untold board-feet of lumber and flasks of quicksilver found their way to San Francisco every year.[51]

Far beyond utility, it was every Californian's civic duty to support the railroad. William Lewis, Chief Engineer of the Pacific and Atlantic Railroad, raised issues far beyond profit when he stated,

> When we further reflect that the Railroad across the Continent must, on leaving San Francisco, enter the Santa Clara Valley, we will be convinced that this is truly the first link of the great work, the early completion of which is loudly demanded by commercial interest, political necessity, and enlightened patriotism.[52]

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[50] Ibid.

[51] San José Semi-Weekly Tribune, 26 January 1855, 2.

[52] Ibid.

The Chief Engineer declared that the initial survey indicated a potential profit of 34 percent in the first year. By the end of the first year of planning, however, the Pacific and Atlantic Railroad fell victim to the Panic of 1855. The initial capitalization cost of approximately 1.7 million dollars in construction alone proved prohibitive. Despite the claims of San José citizens that "we live in a State which *grows* gold," the railroad venture was dead before construction began.[53]

The railroad issue surfaced again in 1859 with two proposed routes. The first was a line directly from the wharves of Alviso to the downtown area of San José. An estimate of $100,000 for the construction of this route was submitted in February 1859 by a Mr. Goodrich. He argued that this shorter line was cost effective and was not dependent upon any other county's or city's cooperation and support.[54] The second option was a San Francisco-San José line which was estimated to amount to one million dollars in construction costs. J.M. Williams argued that a direct line from San José to San Francisco would offer a faster, cheaper way to move goods than via ships from Alviso. Furthermore, he purported that "reliable and respectable men whose name would give confidence" in the venture were organizing a railroad under the laws of California

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[53] San José Tribune, 19 March 1856, 2. Italics in original. See also Jack R. Gibson, "Steel Rails in the Valley," in The Builders in Our Valley: A City of Small Farms, vol. 1, written and compiled by Bertha M. Rice (San José: Privately Printed, 1957), 235-36.

[54] San José Telegraph, 9 February 1859, 2. First name unknown.

and could guarantee the completion of the line. This held sway at the meeting, and the San José Telegraph reported, "we are in favor of a road direct to San Francisco . . . if not, then we go for the Alviso road."[55]

Despite lobbying efforts for the Alviso Railroad, nineteenth-century Californians tended to defer to the bigger and better scheme.[56] A San Francisco and San José Railroad was proposed at the February 1859 meeting, culminating in the official incorporation of the enterprise a year and one-half later. Four years later the San Francisco and San José Railroad was completed.

The completion of the San Francisco and San José Railroad signaled the eventual demise of Alviso. After that point, the port no longer had a monopoly on the shipment of goods in and out of Santa Clara County. The new railroad offered a faster and more economical ride direct from San José to San Francisco. Alviso was no longer convenient, and a turnpike spur-line no longer necessary. The new trains could whisk passengers to San Francisco in only three and one-half hours for a mere $2.50.[57] For San Joséans, it was a grand opening, offering an excuse to hold picnics and military parades.[58]

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[55] Ibid.

[56] For the argument for an Alviso-San José rail line, see the San José Telegraph, 16 February 1859, 2.

[57] Gibson, 235-36.

[58] See advertisement for "Grand Celebration" in the San José Weekly Mercury, 18 February 1864, 3.

Alviso never recovered. Within one month, the steamer *Sophie Lane* reduced its fare to $1.50 each way via Alviso.[59] Within a few years, the remaining warehouses were full, but only a few ships called on Alviso. Railroad competition meant less business for the port, prompting those ships that remained to find new and creative ways to entice business. According to the San José Daily Mercury:

> The steamer *Constance*, John Leale, Master, has changed its time of departure from Alviso from 7 to 5 o'clock P.M., the stages connecting therewith leaving the New York Exchange at 3:45 P.M. By this arrangement passengers are enabled to reach San Francisco in time for church or theater. It costs only one dollar by this route, a saving of just one-half the cost by rail; and who that does not speculate in running stocks could make a dollar easier? Capt. Leale is a very prince of Captains, and his line is deserving of a big share of the travel. The cheap fares of the Alviso route have saved thousands of dollars to the traveling public during the past season.[60]

Alviso's fortunes waned as the rest of the Santa Clara Valley boomed. Shipping was not entirely out of favor, for the existence of the port still created competition for the railroads, thus keeping tariffs low and shipping costs reasonable.[61]

While Alviso's commercial ventures dwindled into insignificance, the residents of the town turned towards a new industry – agriculture. The Santa Clara Valley is essentially one large, deep, alluvial flood plain which is ideal for

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[59] San José Weekly Mercury, 17 March 1864, 4.

[60] San José Daily Mercury, 15 August 1877, 3.

[61] Joyce Burke, "Alviso," in County Chronicles, edited by Margery Quackenbush, Local History Studies, vol. 9 (Cupertino: California History Center, 1972), 9.

agricultural production.[62] The Guadalupe River, which runs straight through Alviso, drains about 160 square miles. In the northeast corner of Alviso, Coyote Creek drains about 360 square miles. This run-off provides the land around Alviso with fine sedimentary soils enhancing agricultural production.[63] The river deposits these alluvial materials near the mouth of the sloughs and mixes with the salt water thus causing flocculation and depositing heavy silt near and around Alviso. This deposition creates more marshland and as the silt encroaches upon the Bay, more area for agriculture is created.[64]

Since no records exist that indicate how many persons were involved in agriculture at the time Alviso was founded, it is unclear whether farming was part of the reason for settlement along the Guadalupe River. The river had been used for agriculture and irrigation for centuries by the Costanoans, and later by Mission Santa Clara. It is not unreasonable to assume that some American settlers made their homes in Alviso for the same purpose. What is clear is that by 1860, even at the height of the maritime industry, a majority of Alviso residents were either farmers or farm laborers.[65]

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[62] Grant W. Schick, The Ohlone and the Oak Woodlands: Cultural Adaptation in the Santa Clara Valley, Research Manuscript Series on the Cultural and Natural History of Santa Clara, no. 4 (Santa Clara: Santa Clara University, 1994), 3, 5.

[63] U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, San Francisco District, Final Guadalupe River Interim Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement, (July 1985), 17.

[64] Broek, 26.

[65] See Chapter 4 for Census data and occupational information.

The presence of a large, accessible aquifer complemented the prime alluvial soils and the nearby Guadalupe River. These artesian wells were dubbed "one of the greatest blessings that Santa Clara enjoys."[66] The first artesian well was bored by the Merritt Brothers of San José in 1854. Initially, the drillers could hit water around sixty to eighty feet, but the gradual depletion of the aquifer saw well depths plummet to over 400 feet deep.[67] By 1865, more than 500 wells had been bored in Santa Clara County.[68] This greatly benefited Alviso, for the average annual rainfall in Alviso is a paltry thirteen inches, compared to an amazing seventy inches that falls only thirty miles away in the Santa Cruz Mountains.[69]

Use of these wells, though indispensable for the agricultural community, had serious repercussions. Between 1915 and 1967, the entire town of Alviso dropped 12.7 feet due to the depletion of the aquifer.[70] Though no records exist regarding the sinking of Alviso prior to 1915, it is likely that the town sank

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[66] Thompson and West, 13.

[67] Ibid. In 1874, G.A. Dabney found water at sixty feet. The pressure of the well was so great that it produced a four-feet-wide stream, six inches deep, that ran for over six weeks before it could be contained. James Murphy's well did not find water until a depth of 437 feet.

[68] David W. Parker, "Farmers Unite for Water Conservation," in Water in the Santa Clara Valley: A History, Seonaid McArthur, ed., Local History Studies, vol. 27 (Cupertino: California Historical Center, 1981), 13.

[69] Charles K. Hart, "Post-War Problems: Struggles for Authority," in Water in the Santa Clara Valley: A History, 85.

[70] J.F. Poland and R.L. Ireland, "Land Subsidence and Aquifer System Compaction, Santa Clara Valley, California, U.S.A.," U.S. Department of the Interior, Geologic Survey (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1971), 13.

significantly, for most artesian well farming occurred prior to 1900. Since Alviso is situated at sea level at the headwaters of the Guadalupe River, the gradual sinking of the town exacerbated the annual inundations caused by the rains and high tides that enabled the Guadalupe to seek quicker routes to the Bay.

Agriculture developed steadily, with crop experimentation culminating in a successful agricultural community. By 1896, Alviso was "one of the best [areas] in the world for vegetables, berries, and small fruits."[71] By the late nineteenth century, apples, pears, tomatoes, raspberries, and blackberries were grown successfully in the region. Asparagus flourished in the bottom lands surrounding Alviso and provided two-thirds of all the asparagus consumed in San Francisco.[72] The most successful crop was the labor-intensive cultivation of strawberries.[73] More than half of all strawberries consumed in San Francisco came from Alviso. The largest strawberry field in the world was located on the ranch of Charles Wade where a reported ninety acres of land was dedicated to strawberries.[74] When the Strawberry Growers' Association was founded in Santa Clara County, it was headquartered in Alviso.[75]

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[71] Santa Clara County and its Resources (San José: San José Mercury News, 1896), 130.

[72] Ibid., 131.

[73] For discussion on Chinese labor and the strawberry crop, see Chapter 5.

[74] Warburton, 25.

[75] San José Daily Mercury, 27 May 1877, 3.

The issue of transportation once again brought economic benefits to Alviso. Ironically, although the San Francisco and San José Railroad almost destroyed Alviso by diverting business from the shipping industry, another railroad briefly revived Alviso's economy. In March 1876, a railroad was incorporated to run a narrow gauge (3 feet wide) railroad from Alameda to Santa Cruz, and was dubbed the South Pacific Coast Railroad. The plan for the line was to go directly through Alviso on its way to San José. However, not all Alvisan residents favored such a venture. On September 16, 1877, John Leitch stood at the north edge of his property, shotgun in hand, awaiting the railroad surveyors. After spending time in jail for this act, Mr. Leitch, upon release, again picked up his shotgun and resumed his vigil on his northern property line. After frantic calls to South Pacific Coast headquarters, the line was moved to bypass his property. The slow S curve around Leitch's property on the rail line is apparent on any Alviso map today.[76]

This new railroad followed the east coast of San Francisco Bay and briefly revived Alviso by laying track right through the center of town. Alviso was no longer dependent upon maritime transportation as its sole source of income; rather it was the ability to ship agricultural crops (its new source of income) to San Francisco by rail *faster than by ship* that was the source of its prosperity.

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[76] Bruce A. MacGregor and Richard Truesdale, South Pacific Coast: A Centennial (Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing Co., 1982), 110.

Ironically, the railroad transformed the town from a bustling maritime port to a sleepy agricultural community.[77]

The new railroad created a boom for agriculture and a bust for the maritime industry. Even with a transfer from one rail line to another in San José, the time to ship produce to San Francisco was less than two hours.[78] By the 1890s, only one steamboat still called on Alviso. When the railroads refused to ship at night, thereby using the cool night air to refrigerate the produce, the San José Farmers Club and Protective Association arranged for steamers to run to San Francisco at 4:00 A.M. The steamers took three hours to ply the Bay and offered prices of 60 cents per chest (compared with $1.00 charged by the railroads). But the railroads won again, for they commenced a night train that took less than two hours to reach San Francisco and lowered prices to match the steamers.[79]

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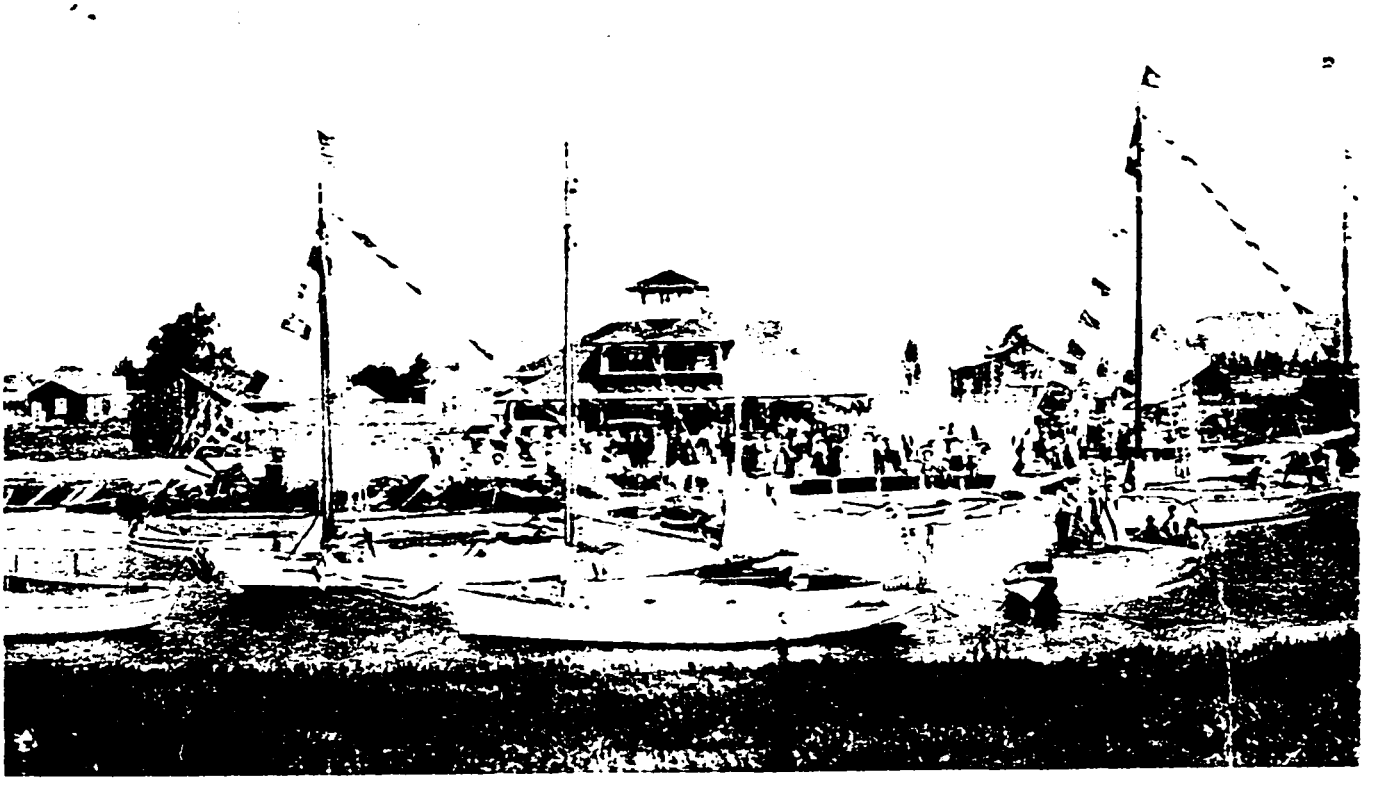
[77] Alviso was not entirely sleepy, for the new rail line brought unsuspected degradation to the town. Alviso, with its penchant for lax rules, enabled several outside interests to take advantage of the apparent freedoms. The Sarsfield Guards picnic of 1879 and the Cigar Makers Union picnic of 1887 were held in Alviso by non-Alvisan residents. Riots broke out when Alvisan residents no longer wanted their town to be used for such activities. The violence became so pronounced that San José residents called for a city ordinance demanding that all rail cars passing through Alviso be sealed. The residents of Alviso, with their low numbers and lack of support (including no newspaper to voice their opinion), could offer no effective resistance to the public relations nightmare. See MacGregor and Truesdale, 110-111.

[78] Ibid., 112.

[79] Jacobson, 168.

Illustration 4



Source: Photographic Collection, "Regatta at Alviso, CA" B12.19,305, San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park.

Demographic Transformation, 1850-1890

As Alviso's economic basis shifted from shipping to agriculture, so did the demographic characteristics of the town. The population, age, cultural background, and occupation of the residents changed dramatically between 1850 and 1890. The town transformed from a predominately white, younger group of commercial entrepreneurs into a predominately Chinese, older group of farm laborers. The census records of 1860, 1870, and 1880 give a picture of the community and how it developed through time.[1]

There is conflicting information on the exact population of Santa Clara County in the state census of 1852. Thompson and West indicate that the population was 6,764.[2] Munro-Fraser is more specific in that he separates the data into ethnic and gender categories. He concludes that the November 18, 1852, census returns show the population was 6,664. As the two conflicting numbers are exactly 100 people apart, this may indicate a clerical error. Which

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[1] The 1850 federal census returns for all of Santa Clara County were lost on their way to the census office. A subsequent state census was taken in November of 1852 for, in addition to Santa Clara County, the returns of Contra Costa County and San Francisco County were also missing (the returns for Contra Costa County were lost, and the returns for San Francisco County were destroyed in a fire). Though Alviso was incorporated in March of that year, specific information on Alviso is unavailable. Only county-wide information exists. See Thompson and West, 16 1/2.

[2] Ibid.

author is correct, however, is unknown. Munro-Fraser writes that there were 6,158 white inhabitants, 53 negroes, 3 mulattoes, and 450 domesticated Indians.[3]

To estimate the population living in Alviso during this time is problematic. In his dissertation, "Alviso, California: A Study in Cultural Historical Geography," James Curtis suggests that the population may have "actually declined [in 1860] from a high perhaps during the early 1850's."[4] Since we know that the population in 1860 was 837, Curtis's assumption, based upon the booming nature of Alviso, is that the population in the early 1850s was near 1,000 persons. This seems unlikely, for the first commercial industries were just being established around 1850 and the most prominent members of the Alvisan community, and the most wealthy citizens (who could afford the exorbitant prices of building a home), did not arrive until 1851 and later.[5]

Fortunately, the detailed returns of the 1860 census survive and give the first accurate picture of who lived in Alviso during this time.[6] The population was

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[3] Munro-Fraser, 159.

[4] Curtis, "Alviso, California," 60.

[5] Charles Wade did not arrive until 1851. Butler, 63.

[6] This is where James Curtis and the author disagree significantly. He purports that the population of Alviso in 1860 was 202 persons in forty-two dwelling houses. His source for this figure was Population Schedules of 1860 for Santa Clara County, Archives of the Library of Congress, unpaginated microfilm." See Curtis, "Alviso, California" 80 (note 33,38). This is a great deal smaller than the 837 persons that the census records document at the National Archives in San Bruno, California. Since Curtis uses these figures as a base in comparing subsequent census data, his assertions on the gradual change of the Alviso population, though not entirely incorrect,

837 persons: 539 males and 298 females.[7] There were 166 households recorded, making for an average number of 5.04 persons under each roof. The official returns indicate that all but six persons were white. This includes two black males, one mulatto male, and three mulatto females. Upon closer scrutiny, forty-one persons were classified as white for the official returns, but their color indicates that they were Indian. Likewise, an individual named John Chinaman was classified as white though his color was listed as mongoloid and his birthplace was China.[8]

The Alvisan populace in 1860 was quite young. Most of the males were in their twenties or thirties, comprising 57.0 percent of the male population, and 36.7 percent of the entire town. The majority of females, conversely, were under the age of twenty, comprising 56.0 percent of the female population. Alviso boasted a very young population, with 64.2 percent of its inhabitants younger than thirty years of age. Persons under the age of forty comprised 86.3 percent

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are certainly suspect. Curtis and the author have different figures regarding age distribution and occupation, but they are minuscule and do not alter the final conclusion of either author. See Curtis, "Alviso, California," 65-77.

[7] Department of Commerce, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census of the United States, 1860. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 173-194. Cabinet 3, Drawer 6, Reel 65 (Hereafter cited as Eighth Census of the United States, 1860). The census records for Alviso are only available in microfilm format, for the U.S. Bureau of the Census only compiled data for bound volumes to include those towns whose populations were greater than 2,500. Though microfilm is unpaginated, there are page numbers on the Schedule 1 documents themselves. All data is compiled from these microfilm documents and data cited in the text which is compiled will be cited simply as Eighth Census of the United States, 1860. If a specific reference to a person, place, or occupation is listed, the page number listed on the Schedule 1 form for Alviso Township will be cited.

[8] Eighth Census of the United States, 1860. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 186.

of the population. This data supports the commonly held belief that most people emigrating to California were young males in their twenties and thirties.[9]

Table 1

Primary Occupations in Alviso for 1860

Occupation	Population
Farm Laborer	172
Farmer	94
Day Laborer	79
Servant	16
Mill Laborer	6
Blacksmith	5
Carpenter	4
Clerk	4

Source: Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Eighth Census of the United States, 1860. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 173-194. Cabinet 3, Drawer 6, Reel 65.

The occupations listed in the 1860 census indicate that Alviso was a very different town from the grandiose one envisioned by its speculative founders. In 1849, Alviso was billed as "the depot and business headquarters of the two finest valleys in California."[10] The town was designed for commercial maritime

[9] In 1850, 73 percent of all California residents were between the ages of twenty to forty and 92 percent of all residents were male. By 1860 this pattern had changed; there were more women and a more diversified age group, but the population of California was still dominated by males in the twenty- to forty-year-old age bracket. See Carey McWilliams, California: the Great Exception (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, 1976), 66.

[10] Alta California, 13 September 1849, 6.

industries. By 1860 much had changed, for the top two occupations were farm laborer (172) and farmer (94), 63.9 percent of the working population. Few occupations listed in the 1860 census were directly linked to maritime commerce.[11]

The labor pool of Alviso was primarily made up of working-class people and farmers. There were few skilled jobs listed in the census. Even if farming were considered skilled labor, most Alvisans still worked as laborers for someone else. Farm laborers comprised 41.3 percent, day laborers accounted for 19.0 percent, servants made up 3.8 percent, and mill laborers were 1.4 percent of the population. Laborers comprised 65.5 percent of all workers in Alviso.

Alviso was a hodgepodge collection of native and foreign-born people. Those born within the United States (or its territories) totaled 627 persons, or 74.9 percent of Alviso's population. By far the most numerous of these came from California, 345 persons. New York accounted for 89, Maine 27, and Missouri 22. In terms of the foreign-born, the Irish made up 25.7 percent. Not surprisingly, the Mexican contingent followed with 34, England accounted for 28 persons, and Chile provided an additional 20 persons. Twenty-eight states and

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[11] Though the entire town dealt, to some degree, with maritime commerce, few occupations were solely dependent upon the sea. One sailor and a few merchants were most likely involved in the maritime trade on a daily basis. There is a large category of day laborers (79 in total) that may have worked on the ships, docks, or warehouses, but the census only lists them as day laborers without regard for a specific industry or trade.

territories and twenty different countries were represented. At the same time, Alviso was widely diverse yet strongly homogeneous in 1860.

Table 2

Primary Places of Origin in Alviso for 1860

Domestic	Population	Foreign	Population
California	345	Ireland	54
New York	89	Mexico	34
Maine	27	England	28
Missouri	22	Chile	20
Ohio	19	Canada	18
Kentucky	17	Scotland	14
Illinois	13	France	13
Michigan	11	Germany	4
Pennsylvania	11	New Zealand	4

Source: Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Eighth Census of the United States, 1860. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 173-194. Cabinet 3, Drawer 6, Reel 65.

The residential makeup was different in all respects by 1870. The population declined almost 30 percent between 1860 and 1870. The 1870 census documents a population of 588 persons. This included 403 males and 185 females. There were 122 households enumerated, thus making the average household size 4.82 persons.[12]

[12] Department of Commerce, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Ninth Census of the United States, 1870. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 1-15. Cabinet 6, Drawer 2, Reel 88 (Hereafter cited as Ninth Census of the United States, 1870).

The most dramatic development indicated in the 1870 census is the diversification of the ethnic population. Listed among the residents was one man categorized as Black, a fifteen-year-old male from Zanzibar named Jefferson Davis.[13] Most significant, was the largest group of new emigrants: a Chinese population of 121 persons. They were mostly male, with only three Chinese females in the town. This Chinese population accounted for 20.6 percent of the entire Alvisan populace.

The age distribution became slightly flatter, revealing no distinguishing characteristics for this period. Males in their twenties and thirties still accounted for 44.6 percent of all males in the town and 30.6 percent of the total Alvisan population, but that is far less than recorded in 1860. Young females under twenty years of age of Alviso continued to dominate, comprising 55.1 percent of the female population. The largest age group this decade was children under ten years of age, and 62.9 percent of the populace was less than thirty years old. Persons under the age of forty comprised 81.8 percent of the population. Alviso was growing older, but not by a significant margin.

New polling questions and a new ethnic minority in Alviso changed the listing of occupations for the 1870 census. The number one occupation in Alviso was keeping house. This did not mean that a majority of Alvisans became housekeepers or domestic servants. The census takers in 1860 ignored the

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[13] Ninth Census of the United States, 1870. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 1.

occupation of women unless they were heads of household. But in 1870 all wives were questioned on their occupation; the majority worked in the home.

Table 3

Primary Occupations in Alviso for 1870

Occupation	Population
Keeping House	75
Farmer	56
Reclaiming Marsh	54
Cultivating Strawberries	52
Laborer	35
Farm Laborer	22
Teamster	8
At Home	7
At School	6
Boatman	6

Source: Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Ninth Census of the United States, 1870. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 1-15. Cabinet 6, Drawer 2, Reel 88.

Apart from keeping house, four of the top five occupations were in agriculture. These occupations were farmer (56), reclaiming marsh (54), cultivating strawberries (52), and farm laborer (22); together they comprised 46.7 percent of the working population. If the category of keeping house is eliminated, to keep the categories and numbers consistent from census to census, these four agricultural occupations accounted for 57.7 percent of Alvisan employment. Though the categories were much more varied, the labor pool

continued to consist mostly of working-class people in 1870. Perhaps due to the specificity of the census questions, Alviso listed twenty more job categories than in the 1860 census. Agriculture still dominated the town's employment, but more citizens were now listed as employed in maritime-related occupations. This included five fisherman, two boathands, one boat captain, and a ship's carpenter.

Table 4

Primary Places of Origin for Alviso for 1870

Domestic	Population	Foreign	Population
California	194	China	121
New York	43	Ireland	66
Massachusetts	16	Chile	34
Pennsylvania	10	Canada	11
Maine	7	France	11
Illinois	6	England	9
New Jersey	6	Mexico	8

Source: Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Ninth Census of the United States, 1870. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 1-15. Cabinet 6, Drawer 2, Reel 88.

As the population declined in the decade after 1860, the population became less diverse in its origins. Scarcely half of the 588 residents were born within the United States and its territories. California once again led the way with 197 persons, followed by New York with 43 persons. One significant change in

the 1870 census was the increase in the Chinese population which is primarily responsible for the sharp decrease in the percentage of domestic-born residents. All 121 Chinese residents were born in China. There continued to be a significant Irish population, accounting for 66 total persons. Chile provided 34 residents in the 1870 census.

The census of 1870 underscores the diversity of the workforce as well as the diversity of its population. Although the town continued to be dominated by agricultural occupations, there were far more types of jobs listed. Likewise, apart from those born in California, there were more Chinese residents in Alviso than any other type of resident.

The census of 1880 revealed an increase in population to 721 persons. This included a male population of 585 persons. The female population dropped to 136 individuals. Although there were 112 dwellings listed in Alviso, the census indicates that there were 113 families. This suggests that the economy was booming and housing was at a premium. The average household size jumped to 5.42 persons.[14]

The numbers indicate that Alviso was growing in a way that had not been seen since the 1850s. The male population was up while the female population was drastically down. Men aged ten to forty years accounted for 67.5 percent of

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[14] Department of Commerce, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Tenth Census of the United States, 1880. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 1-16. Cabinet 9, Drawer 2, Reel 82 (Hereafter cited as Tenth Census of the United States, 1880).

the male population and 54.8 percent of the total Alvisan populace. In addition to the surge of young men in the town, the evidence also indicates that the male population was growing older, suggesting that despite the influx of people, a solid core of citizens was continuing to reside in the town for many years. The female age distribution was similar to the previous census, except for a dramatic decrease in girls under the age of ten.

Table 5

Primary Occupations in Alviso for 1880

Occupation	Population
Laborer	404
At School	90
Keep House	60
Farmer	39
At Home	11
Teamster	8
Farm Laborer	5

Source: Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Tenth Census of the United States, 1880. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 1-16. Cabinet 9, Drawer 2, Reel 82.

The white population dropped for the third straight decade, giving rise to the new majority, a Chinese population of 374 persons that accounted for 51.9 percent of the entire population. It is significant to note that there is not one Chinese woman in this figure; they are all men predominately in their teens and

twenties, although several were in their fifties and sixties. There were no other colors, cultures, or ethnicities listed in this census.

Two things dominated the occupation listings in the 1880 census. The first was that children in their teen years were allowed to list their occupations, such as whether they were at school, at home, at college, or even students of law.[15] This skews the overall occupation figures and must be factored out in order to sustain consistency between the three census reports. The second had to do with the incredible influx of Chinese workers. All but one were listed as laborers. Not only does this not give any specifics on what type of labor these immigrants did, but it also may indicate either a lack of interest or a lack of concern for the Chinese population by the census taker.

The new categories of keeping house, at school, at home, at college, and student of law accounted for one quarter of the entire population. The largest single occupation was laborer with 61.9 percent of the population. Alviso was a laboring-class town. Some citizens were becoming important members of their community. There was a captain of a schooner, a Justice of the Peace, a stage proprietor, and even a Post Mistress. There were but 39 farmers left in the town in 1880 and only 5 persons listed their occupation as farm laborer. It is,

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[15] Those polled in the 1870 census were also allowed to submit that they either were at school, or at home, but not to the extent that it became one of the major occupations of the citizens of Alviso. Most teens in the 1870 census left the occupation field blank, though it is assumed that some were attending school at the time. Likewise, those who listed their occupation as at home in the 1870 census were predominately older men and women in their sixties or older who were living with their children.

however, generally agreed that the 404 laborers (of whom 373 were Chinese) worked in the fields.[16]

Table 6

Primary Places of Origin for Alviso for 1880

Domestic	Population	Foreign	Population
California	179	China	374
New York	31	Ireland	22
Michigan	10	England	19
Pennsylvania	8	Portugal	6
Wisconsin	6	France	5

Source: Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Tenth Census of the United States, 1880. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 1-16. Cabinet 9, Drawer 2, Reel 82.

The 1880 census showed an increase in both California and Chinese-born residents. California accounted for 68.8 percent of all domestically-born persons. China accounted for 81.1 percent of all foreign-born residents. Taken together these two categories provided 76.7 percent of the population. The town had become overwhelmingly foreign born. Those who were born within the United States and its territories were also overwhelmingly native to California. Alviso had a strong Chinese influence in the census of 1880. Because of these

[16] See Gloria Sun Hom, ed., Chinese Argonauts: An Anthology of the Chinese Contributions to the Historical Development of Santa Clara County (Los Altos: Foothill Community College, 1971). (Hereafter cited as Chinese Argonauts).

374 men, the town become largely foreign, predominately lower working class, and increasingly male.

Unlike the 1850 census, the census of 1890 was not lost on its way to the census office. Like the 1850 census, however, the census of 1890 is no longer extant due to a fire in 1921 that destroyed all but 6,000 names.[17] No specific figures for the 1890 census exist apart from the overall population. Only general figures exist for Santa Clara County. Alviso boasted its largest population ever recorded with 967 persons.[18] This 25 percent increase was not unique to Alviso for this decade. The whole of Santa Clara County's population increased 27 percent growing from 35,039 persons to 48,005 persons between 1880 and 1890. Unfortunately, no other demographic information is available.

Alviso underwent dramatic and significant changes in its population between 1850 and 1890. Although only three of the five census records during this time contain reasonably complete information, they demonstrate the transformation of this port town.

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[17] U.S. Census Bureau, Factfinder for the Nation, CFF No. 2, (April 1997): 3; and National Archives memorandum, "US Census Records on Microfilm at the National Archives and Records Administration Pacific Region (San Francisco)," 24 April 1997.

[18] Department of the Interior, Compendium of the 11th Census: 1890, Part 1, Volume 1, Population (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1892), Table 3, 74. (Hereafter cited as Compendium of the 11th Census: 1890). This multivolume Compendium does have specific demographic information for individual cities, but it required a minimum population of 2,500 persons.

Table 7

Population of Alviso 1850-1890

Classification	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890
White Male	n/a	536	284	211	n/a
White Female	n/a	295	182	136	n/a
Black Male	n/a	2	1	0	n/a
Back Female	n/a	0	0	0	n/a
Mulatto Male	n/a	1	0	0	n/a
Mulatto Female	n/a	3	0	0	n/a
Chinese Male	n/a	0	118	374	n/a
Chinese Female	n/a	0	3	0	n/a
Total Population	n/a	837	588	721	967

Source: Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Eighth Census of the United States, 1860. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 173-194. Cabinet 3, Drawer 6, Reel 65; Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Ninth Census of the United States, 1870. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 1-15. Cabinet 6, Drawer 2, Reel 88; Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Tenth Census of the United States, 1880. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 1-16. Cabinet 9, Drawer 2, Reel 82; Department of the Interior, Compendium of the 11th Census: 1890, Part 1, Volume 1, Population (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1892), Table 3, 74.

The population trend for the second half of the nineteenth century followed the economic trends of the town. Though no specific population figures exist for 1850, it is apparent that Alviso was a bustling port town by 1852. This coincides with the general population boom for the whole of California and the Santa Clara Valley due to the massive influx of gold seekers into the state. By 1860 Alviso boasted a population of 837 persons. However, when the new San

Francisco-San José Railroad commenced operations in 1864, the town lost business and prosperity due to the new, faster, and cheaper way to ship goods to the deep water wharves of San Francisco. By 1870 Alviso contained only 588 persons. It grew consistently over the next twenty years due to renewed prosperity and the rise of agriculture which put the town in the forefront of the shipment of fruit and fruit products. This prosperity, coupled with a large increase in the Chinese population, caused the population to rise to 967 persons in 1890, the highest ever recorded.

Likewise, the age distribution of the residents followed the overall trend throughout California during the nineteenth century. The first individually recorded residents of the town were primarily young men in their twenties and thirties. This specific population declined during the lean years of the 1860s, but resurged during the 1880s due to new agricultural ventures, the increase in Chinese men in their twenties and thirties, and land speculation in the Santa Clara Valley. Most age groups rose in 1880 after consistently declining between 1860 and 1870.

Conversely, the female population in all but two age groupings consistently declined between 1860 and 1880. The female population dropped 54.3 percent during this thirty-year period. As the Chinese population in 1880 contained no females, and the white population consistently declined over this period, it is understandable that not only did the number of women in their

childbearing years decline, but the number of children also dropped dramatically.[19]

The labor pool and the occupations also shifted between the 1850s and the 1890s. At the onset of the founding of Alviso, the major use of surrounding land was for ranching along the vast expanses of the *Rincon de los Esteros* and the *Embarcadero de Santa Clara* ranchos. As the town began to grow, more commercial ventures developed in the downtown area while the land once used for ranching was methodically turned under the plow. In 1860, six of the top ten real estate holders were farmers. In 1870, all eleven of the top real estate holders were farmers.[20]

The town became more commercial in nature towards the turn of the century. The occupations listed in the census records became more numerous, more diverse, and more specific. More people associated with the maritime industries were listed, while the rise in transportation between Alviso and San José became a natural extension of the maritime route between San Francisco and Alviso. There were more teamsters than before, as well as a wheelwright and a stage proprietor.[21]

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[19] See Appendix B.

[20] Eighth Census of the United States, 1860; Ninth Census of the United States, 1870. See Appendices C and D.

[21] See Appendices E, F, and G.

The birthplaces of the Alvisan residents shifted dramatically. The first residents of the town were mostly white males from the United States, primarily from California and New York. Those from foreign lands accounted for 25.1 percent of the population and were primarily from the predominately white countries of Ireland, England and Canada, as well as the Latin American countries of Mexico and Chile.[22]

By the last decade of the nineteenth century, however, domestic-born residents of Alviso were in the minority as were residents born abroad in England and Ireland. Chinese-born residents accounted for 81.1 percent of the foreign-born population and constituted a majority of the total population. Those born in Latin America accounted for only two percent of the population. The Chinese population dominated all categories in the 1860-1880 census rolls.

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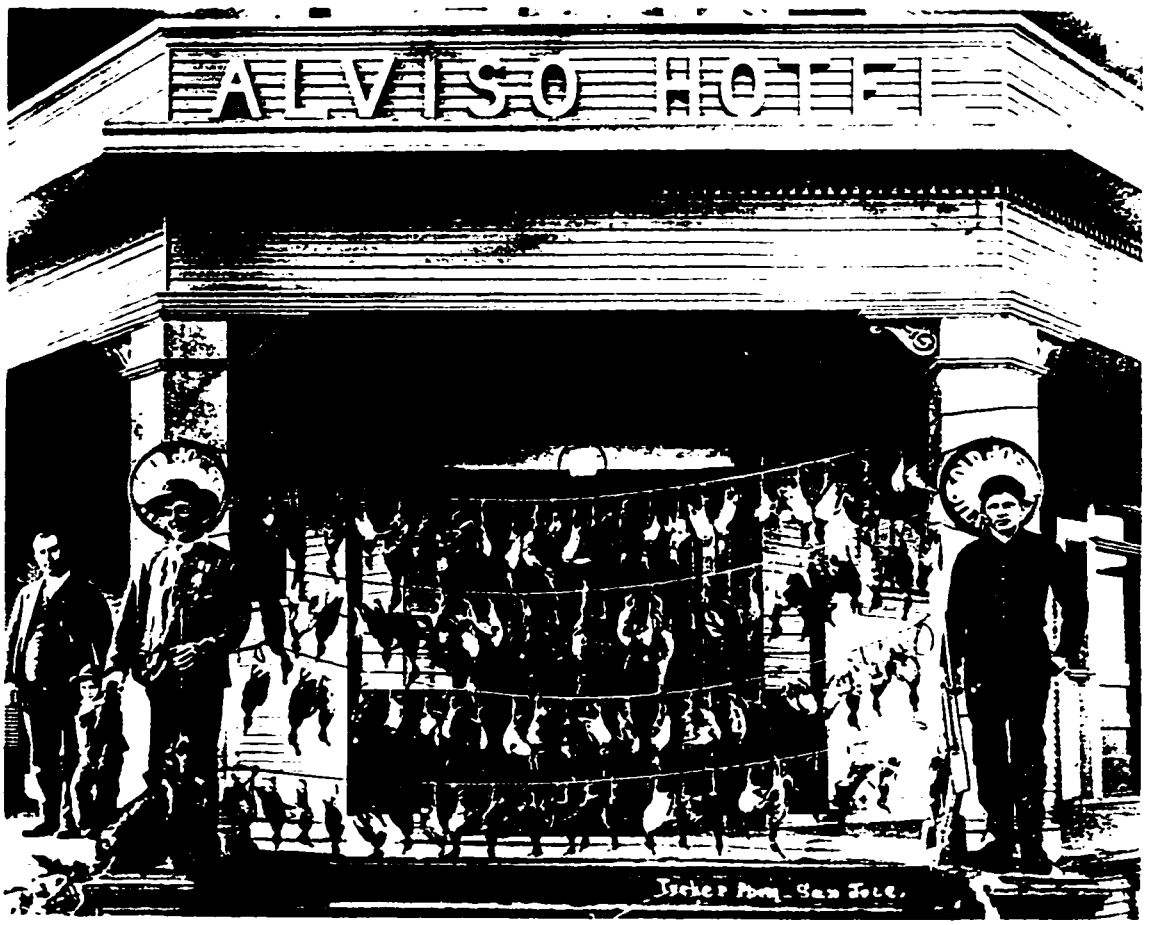
[22] See Appendices H, I, and J.

Illustration 5



Source: Photographic Collection, "Hunters Display Their Take in Front of the Alviso Hotel" B25.19,125, San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park.

Ethnic and Gender Relations

The population of Alviso consistently had a notable mixture of different cultures throughout the nineteenth century. The most prominent trend was the influx of Chinese workers into the town, but a closer look shows that there was always a diverse group of citizens living and working together.[1]

A separation clearly existed between the Chinese and the whites. Within the white community, however, there was relative harmony and cooperation regardless of cultural background.[2] The initial residents of Alviso were Spanish, yet several of Ignacio Alviso's daughters and granddaughters married Americans and Scots.[3] There is no evidence of racial or ethnic tension during the nineteenth century within the white population. This may be the result of a large domestic white population and foreign residents who often came from countries of predominately white ancestry, such as Europe, New Zealand and Australia. It

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[1] See Appendices H, I, and J.

[2] This white community is defined here as the 1860-80 census takers would have classified the population, meaning that if persons were not Indian, Black, Mulatto or Chinese, they were white. This included persons from Europe as well as Central and Latin America

[3] Charles Wade, an American, married Estefina Alviso, daughter of Domingo Alviso. John Martin, a Scot, married Barclisa Bernal, who had inherited a portion of the Alviso ranch. Ignacio Alviso's granddaughter, Pauline Berryessa, married Charles Young, an American. See Keith Ponsford, "The Alviso Family," Manuscript, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley, 29-30. See also Warburton, 24; Zebroski, 63.

seems reasonable that Alviso became a stable population due to intermarriage and intermixing of several cultures.

Though the white population was superseded in number by the Chinese in the 1870s, it dominated all of the commercial ventures in the town throughout the entire nineteenth century. Advertisements for Alvisan merchants appeared in newspapers as early as January 1850.[4] Warehouses, Packet Lines, and other shipping or transportation ventures were advertised in both the San José and San Francisco newspapers throughout the 1850s and 1860s. All were owned by whites.

Although the Chinese population began to grow around 1870, the Chineses did not venture into commerce. The best source for locating commercial industries in the Santa Clara Valley is the San José City Directory which commenced publication in 1870. In that year, only two enterprises in Alviso were listed, a general merchandise store owned by George Evans and a grocery store owned by D.K. Tilden.[5] By 1874 two hotels, a meat market, and a warehouse were also listed.[6]

The stature and position of the white population is readily apparent in the 1880 San José City Directory and subsequent editions. Beginning with this

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[4] Advertisement for shipping via the steamer *Sacramento*. Alta California, 31 January 1850, 3.

[5] The San José Directory 1870 (San Francisco: Excelsior Press, 1870), 241.

[6] Directory of the City of San José 1874 (San Francisco: Bacon & Co., 1874), 223.

issue, small vignettes described each township. Although the 1880 census indicates that the population of Alviso was 721 persons, the Directory states that, "[Alviso] has a population of 150."[7] By 1887 the Directory purported that only 150 persons lived in Alviso.[8] This figure indicates that only adult white males were counted as persons in this publication.[9] A close examination of the directories between the years 1870 and 1890 indicates a rise in three areas: the number of persons listed, the number of farmers, and the number of commercial ventures. Although this indicates that Alviso was growing and expanding, not one person of color is mentioned.

The white population remained stable and homogeneous, dominating Alviso's commercial enterprises. While the history of California and Santa Clara County contains stories of an organized effort to subjugate the Chinese population legally, there is no record of any hostility or bigotry of a white Alvisan resident toward a Chinese resident.

The Chinese population offered a stark contrast of lifestyle and occupation in nineteenth-century Alviso. Considered outcasts throughout the country and especially in the state of California, Chinese residents of Alviso enjoyed decades

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[7] Tenth Census of the United States, 1880; Directory of the City of San José 1881-1882 (San Francisco: L.M. McKenney & Co., 1880), 244.

[8] San José City Directory 1887-8 (San Francisco: Uhlhorn & McKenney, 1887), 346.

[9] The white male population of Alviso was 211 persons in 1880. Once children are factored out of this figure, 150 adult white males is an accurate assessment. See Tenth Census of the United States, 1880.

of relative prosperity compared with their brethren outside the town. They were successful and prosperous despite the fact that they could not own property, hold public office, or even vote during this time period.

Their looks, lifestyles, and work ethic alienated the Chinese from the white population as soon as first arrivals disembarked off the brig *Eagle* in February 1848.[10] Most Chinese came to California that year for the same reason everyone else did – gold. After leaving the gold fields they found employment building railroads throughout the West. The first railroad that utilized Chinese labor was the San Francisco-San José Railroad.[11] Chinese workers soon flocked to Santa Clara County in search of work. They found plenty of employers looking for cheap labor. They built roads and wineries, cleared land, and reclaimed marshes. Chinese workers were paid $1.00 per day compared with $2.50 to $4.00 per day for a white worker. This made them indispensable, yet despised, by the white population of Santa Clara County.[12]

The Chinese were seen as extremely thrifty and industrious, yet these two qualities were part of the reason that they were despised. The first American Governor of California, and onetime Alviso resident, Peter H. Burnett, thought

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[10] Kenneth Chow, "The History of the Chinese in Santa Clara County," in Chinese Argonauts, 1

[11] Ping Chiu, Chinese Labor in California, 1850-1880 (Madison, WI: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1969), 41. See also Gilbert Olsen and Richard Floyd, "The San José Railroad and Crocker's Pets," in Chinese Argonauts, 132-42.

[12] Yvonne Jacobson, Passing Farms, Enduring Values: California's Santa Clara Valley (Los Altos: William Kaufmann, Inc., 1984), 155.

the Chinese were "accustomed to live upon as little as would possibly support human life."[13] Burnett purported that though whites and Chinese could work the same and at the same skill level, the Chinese fared better because the whites "cannot live so cheaply."[14] He further surmised that if "the two races would stand *precisely* and *practically* equal in *all* respects, in one century the Chinese would own all the property on the Coast."[15] Despite this apparent admiration for the Chinese, Burnett still opposed their settlement in California. He only wished to trade with them, not live among them.[16]

In addition to their work ethic, apparent lowly lifestyle, and their thriftiness, the Chinese were despised and excluded due to their manner and dress. They appeared "un-Americanized."[17] The Chinese chose to remain in their native dress, which was a wide, block-style shirt that reached to the knees and had a tight fitting collar around the neck. The pants, of the same color and cloth, were wide and did not quite reach the ankle. If people labored out-of-doors, they wore grass or bamboo hats that were conical and looked like umbrellas. Men and

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[13] Burnett, 352.

[14] Ibid., 354.

[15] Ibid., 355. Italics in original.

[16] Ibid., 356.

[17] Chow, 11.

women dressed alike. The men often had longer hair than the women, wearing the traditional queue that often reached below the waistline.[18]

Chinese immigrants dramatically increased their presence in Santa Clara County between 1860 and 1890. In 1860 the Chinese population was only 22 persons.[19] This number increased to 1,525 in 1870, to 2,695 in 1880, and 2,273 in 1890.[20] The number of Chinese persons living in Alviso escalated at approximately the same rate.

At first a portion of the population seemed to support the Chinese settlement. A staunch Republican newspaper, the San José Daily Mercury, voiced its support for the rights of the Chinese workers. They served a purpose, the paper wrote, in keeping the wages down so that California might be prosperous. Furthermore, "the comforts of life are what we want, and those the Chinese help us to attain."[21] If the Chinese only came to California to make money and return to China, "so be it: that may be one of the means, which in the regular order of events, will help to regenerate and enlighten the world."[22]

Yet, when the first Chinese school opened in Santa Clara, the San José Daily Mercury showed its true colors. The school opened in January 1869 and

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Sucheng Chan, This Bittersweet Soil (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 124.

[20] Compendium of the 11th Census: 1890, Table 14, 516.

[21] San José Daily Mercury, 17 August 1869, 2.

[22] Ibid.

met three times a week, enrolling between 15 and 20 students. In August 1869, the paper declared, "the school for the instruction of the Chinese still continues in Santa Clara, notwithstanding the howl of the Democrats, and those who burn churches."[23] Race was a hotly contested issue both in and out of the political arena.

In less than ten years the paper that once lambasted the Democrats sounded much like its old enemy. By 1877 several announcements in the Daily Mercury opposed Chinese immigration and employment in Santa Clara Valley. An article in March of 1877 praised the first annual ball for the Anti-Chinese Association.[24] It was the social event of the year. A few weeks later there was a great celebration due to the opening of the Anti-Chinese Laundry Association which now operated an alternative to Chinese launderers.[25]

Unemployment in the Santa Clara Valley was high in the late 1870s. White residents feared that poorly paid Chinese workers would be more attractive than unemployed white workers. In May, the Daily Mercury announced the formation of the Anti-Chinese and Protective Workingman's Association.[26] Violence broke out on several occasions in anti-Chinese demonstrations. Two of

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[23] San José Daily Mercury, 12 August 1869, 2.

[24] San José Daily Mercury, 13 March 1877, 2.

[25] San José Daily Mercury, 28 March 1877, 3. This was more than a practical measure to curb Chinese employment, it was symbolic as well. The first Chinese person to settle in San José arrived in 1852 and opened the first wash house the town had ever seen. See Chow, 1.

[26] San José Daily Mercury, 25 May 1877, 3.

the largest anti-Chinese groups met in July 1877 to resolve the issue in a nonviolent manner. When the meeting ended, they submitted:

> Whereas, The present excited condition of the public mind in regard to the relation of labor and capital, and the effort of certain disorderly and riotous persons to take advantages thereof and promote disturbance and mob violence, and
>
> Whereas, An effort has been made to connect such disorder with the societies organized to lawfully oppose the importation and employment of Mongolians, therefore, be it
>
> *Resolved*, That the Caucasians and Anti-Coolie societies of San José utterly repudiate any and all connections or sympathy with any such persons or classes.
>
> *Resolved*, That while we believe that systematic organization is the best method of opposing the Chinese evil, we pledge ourselves as law-abiding citizens not only to oppose all disorder and unlawful action as individuals, but also to hold ourselves in readiness to respond to any call of lawful authority in the effort to instantly suppress any disturbances whatever, if such should occur.[27]

The Chinese in Santa Clara County were despised and subjected to discrimination and violence. They found solace in Chinatowns that sprang up in San José and Santa Clara. In due time, both were burned to the ground under suspicious circumstances.[28] The Chinese in Alviso, perhaps due to their increasingly superior numbers and significant role as the labor which made Alviso prosperous, fared better than their Santa Clara County counterparts.

In Alviso, the Chinese worked and lived side by side with their white neighbors in relative harmony. As they grew in number, they did not suffer the

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[27] San José Daily Mercury, 26 July 1877, 3. Italics in original.

[28] See David Gawrosch, "Chinatown Fire," in Chinese Argonauts, 97-100.

same hardships as those who lived in San José. In fact, they seemed to be more prosperous in the fields than in the cities. Though they did not own any property in Alviso, they were indispensable to the town's economy.

Alviso boasted one Chinese man in the 1860 census, a thirty-year-old farm laborer named John Chinaman.[29] He lived and worked on the farm of an Irishman named Michael Meyers. Eleven people lived on the property and apart from three children under the age of ten, the rest were farm laborers ranging from twenty to sixty years of age hailing from Ireland, England, and Missouri.[30]

By 1870 the demographics in Alviso dramatically shifted and the Chinese population now made up over twenty percent of residents. Most were still involved in agriculture, but a few had become cooks or fishermen. This population included only three females among the 188 Chinese males in Alviso. Fae Lui, a thirty-two-year-old cook, lived among seven males ranging in age from sixteen to fifty-two. One of these men even had a personal estate estimated at 200 dollars.[31] The other two women's occupations were listed as keeping house. Twenty-eight-year-old Lau Ah lived with two older Chinese fishermen.[32] Twenty-

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[29] Eighth Census of the United States, 1860. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 186.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ninth Census of the United States, 1870. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 15.

[32] Ibid., 5-6. The two men, Charley and Jim Ah, were 49 and 57 years of age respectively, and listed no personal assets. Lau Ah may have been the daughter of one of the men, but most Chinese in Alviso had the last name Ah.

year-old Shun Ah lived with five Chinese men ranging in age from nineteen to thirty-six who were engaged in cultivating strawberries.[33]

Table 8

Chinese Occupations in Alviso for 1870

Occupation	Population
Reclaiming Marsh	54
Cultivating Strawberries	52
Cook	4
Fisherman	4
Cultivating Blackberries	3
Keeping House	2
Assistant Cook	1
Laborer	1

Source: Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Ninth Census of the United States, 1870. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 1-15. Cabinet 6, Drawer 2, Reel 88.

The occupational structure for the Alvisan Chinese in 1870 clearly demonstrates their role in agriculture, including marsh reclamation. This type of intensive and difficult labor fell upon the Chinese laborer because it was considered beneath the dignity of a white worker. The California Investment Company purchased thousands of acres of wetlands along the southern shore of San Francisco Bay and began to expunge the saltwater from the marsh by

[33] Ibid., 10.

erecting levees to trap the saltwater which would later be pumped out. This land was then irrigated with freshwater brought up from the aquifer via artesian wells. The project was later scrapped due to litigation centering around land ownership.[34]

Table 9

Chinese Occupations in Alviso for 1880

Occupation	Population
Laborer	370
Wash House	2
Farmer	1
Raise Strawberries	1

Source: Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Tenth Census of the United States, 1880. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 1-16. Cabinet 9, Drawer 2, Reel 82.

By 1880 the Chinese population in Alviso comprised the majority of the town's residents and remained firmly entrenched in agriculture. One hundred percent of the Chinese population was male, yet almost half of the men were listed as married. Hop Kia and Ah Sing, thirty-five and thirty-four years of age respectively, operated the Wash House in Alviso. This was the only non-agricultural pursuit run by the entire Alvisan Chinese population.[35]

[34] Sawyer, 143; Curtis, "Alviso, California," 75-76.

In the 1870s the Alvisan Chinese gained employment in non-agricultural pursuits. A canning factory was desperately needed in Santa Clara County to accommodate the massive harvests of fruits and vegetables. Due to its prominent location as the maritime shipping point for the entire valley, Alviso was an obvious choice for the location of the cannery. The Fruit Growers Union, however, was wary of the heavy concentration of Chinese workers in Alviso, and feared that no white worker would be employed. The cannery would have created an entirely new revenue producing structure in Alviso, but the citizens of San José, Santa Clara, as well as the local newspapers, decried this new venture as a deprived and racist scheme to employ Chinese workers to the exclusion of white laborers.

The San José Daily Mercury, once the friend of Chinese labor, suggested that the location of the cannery be moved to Santa Clara. Though an available labor base existed in Alviso, the construction of a cannery in Santa Clara would "create a demand for and bring laborers there," while giving, "employment to a number of women and children."[36] If the cannery were established in Alviso, "it will necessitate the employment of Chinamen, while at Santa Clara there will be no trouble in securing white labor."[37] A cannery was eventually built in Alviso, but not until twenty years later when hatred towards Chinese workers waned.

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[35] Tenth Census of the United States, 1880. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 2.

[36] San José Daily Mercury, 20 May 1877, 3.

[37] Ibid.

Ironically, this cannery was built by a Chinese man, employed mostly Chinese workers, and became world renowned for its products.[38]

In agriculture, the Chinese excelled in the cultivation of strawberries. The Chinese dominated the strawberry industry in the 1870s. No white worker would do the stooping labor that strawberry cultivation required. No white worker is listed as a berry-cultivator in the 1860, 1870 or 1880 manuscript population census.[39] This created a niche for the Chinese workers and earned them a respectable amount of money.[40]

Since Chinese were not allowed to own property in California during the nineteenth century, they leased land from white farmers and split the proceeds equally.[41] A journal left by one of Alviso's landowners, William A.Z. Edwards, demonstrates this relationship as well as the mutuality of interests that existed between white landlords and Chinese tenant farmers.[42] His 1872 diary confirms

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[38] MacGregor and Truesdale, 110.

[39] Chan, 124.

[40] Connie Young Yu, Chinatown, San José, USA (San José: San José Historical Museum Association, 1991), 9.

[41] Ibid. The lack of Chinese property rights is also demonstrated in the 1870 census. Although at least one person of Chinese descent had accumulated personal estate assets, no Chinese resident had any real estate assets. Estate values (both personal and real) for 1880 are unavailable because the census bureau discontinued recording this figures.

[42] William A.Z. Edwards is listed as an Alviso landowner and not an Alviso resident because, although he farmed several hundred acres in Alviso, his residence was located in San José. Born in England in 1823, Edwards emigrated to the U.S. in 1844. He sailed to California in 1853 and purchased the Alviso lands in 1857. See the Diary of William A.Z. Edwards (1823-1908), Unpaginated Microfilm, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. (Hereafter cited as Edwards Diary).

the use of Chinese labor in the fields and the $1.00 per day wage for this labor.[43] Perhaps out of utility, benevolence, or sympathy, Edwards built a house for his strawberry workers on his property. Between December 16, 1872, when he "got the foundation and floor laid," to December 23rd when "Chuck Kee and I built a kitchen at the west end of the shanty," Edwards and his Chinese workers constructed their new home.[44]

The next year Edwards leased ten acres to Ah Coy for a period of five years. Ah Coy planned to plant strawberries and vegetables. Edwards furnished the house, tools, water, chests, and sacks. Ah Coy provided the labor and nurturing care of the field. Edwards "divide[d] equally with him after all expenses are paid." This was not simply an oral understanding, but a binding contract. Edwards writes, "Ah Coy and I signed our agreement to the above effect and W.S. Broughton witnessed it."[45]

The relationship between tenants and landowners was positive, amiable, and often appeared akin to familial relations. In 1879 (more than five years after Edwards leased Ah Coy the ten acres), Ah Coy visited Edwards and offered him a gift of "preserved ginger, a box of cigars and a package of candy."[46] Edwards

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[43] On April 5, 1872, Edwards hired a Chinese worker to "hoe asparagus, currants, and blackberries," for which he paid $1.00. On June 6th of the same year he "paid a Chinese $1.50 for 1 and 1/2 days work hoeing strawberries." See Edwards Diary.

[44] Edwards Diary.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

was pleased and it is apparent that, although there were certainly cultural and class differences, Edwards and Ah Coy and his family considered each other members of an extended family.

Throughout his diary, Edwards writes nothing but positive recollections of his Chinese workers. The same is not true of other cultures. It is interesting to note the differences between the comments Edwards made about the Irish and Chinese workers. When speaking of the Chinese, Edwards "hired a Chinese . . for which I paid him $1.00." As for the Irish, "an Irish tramp split some wood for which he took breakfast." The Chinese are "paid," the Irish "take," and the relationship between white landowners and Chinese tenants remained positive throughout the nineteenth century.

Other prominent landholders were also instrumental in bringing Chinese to Alviso. William Erkson leased sixteen acres to four Chinese. He, like Edwards, also supplied a house, as well as draft animals and tools. He even financed the drilling of a well for crop irrigation. Erkson and his Chinese renters split the proceeds in half after harvest.[47] William Boots, one of the most succesful farmers in Alviso, also sublet his land to Chinese tenants. He supplied the tools (but not a house), and split the proceeds in half after harvest. Boots

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[47] Chan, 126.

took the goods to market, but charged his tenants approximately half a days wage for the service.[48]

The Chinese prospered in the strawberry business into the 1880s. One author even submits that "the Chinese had absolute control over the stawberry[sic] fields."[49] Chinese workers controlled both the labor and production of the strawberry crop in Santa Clara County. In response to anti-Chinese sentiments and legal constrictions of Chinese rights, the Chinese workers organized into "tongs," often called brotherhood groups, which resembled workers' unions.[50] Farmers often contracted with the leaders of the tongs for seasonal workers. Yet, if a tong thought that overproducing and saturating the market was driving down the price, it would withhold workers. Likewise, if the strawberry market was booming, the tong would locate and provide as many workers as the farmer needed.[51]

These tongs were essential to Chinese survival and success in Santa Clara County. When white farmers tried to pay less than the $1.00 per day wage for Chinese labor, the tong withheld the Chinese labor services. Crops went unpicked. The tongs provided job security and a sustainable wage for the Chinese laborers. Cooperation with the tongs was imperative to get strawberries

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[48] Ibid., 127.

[49] Chow, 7.

[50] Jacobson, 155.

[51] Chow, 7.

picked. Since white workers disdained work in the strawberry fields, it fell solely on the shoulders of the Chinese. The farmers depended on the Chinese tongs, and the Chinese depended on the strawberry fields for their livelihood.

As the Chinese residents of Alviso were breaking out of the bonds that California law and society placed upon them, the women of Alviso were slower to leave the traditional household. As indicated by the census records, most women of working age were either at home, keeping house, or at school. Few women worked outside the home.

Prior to the American emigration to the valley, women of Spanish and Mexican heritage were staunchly entrenched in the traditional lifestyle of the *Californio*. The women cared for the home, prepared the food, raised the children, and assisted in the farming and ranching efforts. The family in the Mexican and Spanish households controlled all aspects of their children's lives, including marriage. This continued in these households even after the Americans arrived. When Charles Wade moved to Alviso, he fell in love with Estefina Alviso, daughter of Domingo and Maria Magdalena Alviso. Estefina's widowed mother disapproved of the announced marriage for Charles was "a fair-haired gringo and an infidel (non-Catholic)."[52] When Charles declined to convert to Catholicism, the wedding was called off by the Alviso family and Charles and Estefina were forced to elope.

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[52] Warburton, 24.

As men were considered head of the household, women were always listed second in the census records and the family's assets were always kept in the man's name. This rule had a few exceptions. Only eight women in Alviso are listed as heads of household out of 166 homes in the 1860 census. They include Dominga Berryessa (twenty years old, no assets),[53] Antonia Narvaez (forty years old, farmer, 800 dollars in personal estate assets),[54] Theodora Alviso (fifty years old, farmer, 1,000 dollars in real estate and 200 dollars in personal estate assets),[55] Concepcion Alviso, (forty-five years old, farmer, 800 dollars in real estate and 75 dollars in personal estate assets),[56] Vincent LaForge (fifty-two years old, 130 dollars in personal estate assets),[57] Luciana Mesa (twenty years old),[58] Manuela Alviso (forty-three years old, farmer, 5,000 dollars in real estate and 1,000 dollars in personal estate assets),[59] and Luisa Santisan (forty-six years old, farmer, 200 dollars in personal estate assets).[60] These women were mostly in their forties and fifties and were descendants of the original Alviso and

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[53] Eighth Census of the United States, 1860. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 176.

[54] Eighth Census of the United States, 1860. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 181.

[55] Eighth Census of the United States, 1860. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 185.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Eighth Census of the United States, 1860. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 190.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Eighth Census of the United States, 1860. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 193.

[60] Ibid.

Berryessa families. They appeared to have inherited their wealth after the death of their husbands. No commercial ventures are listed, revealing that all of their assets arose from agricultural pursuits.

Coinciding with the decline of the overall population in Alviso by 1870, only six women out of 122 families were listed as heads of household in the 1870 census. They were Catravias Alviso (thirty-six years old, keeping house, 400 dollars in real estate assets),[61] Louisa Vincent (sixty-two years old, hotel keeper, 1,000 dollars in real estate and 300 dollars in personal estate assets),[62] Maria Crotty (fifty-six years old, wash woman, 600 dollars in real estate assets),[63] Caroline Loveless (twenty-three years old, housekeeper, 2,000 dollars in personal estate assets),[64] Theodora Sanchez (fifty years old, keeping house),[65] and Mary Shaughnessy (forty-five years old, keeping house, 5,000 dollars in real estate and 7,000 dollars in personal estate assets).[66] Two of the six women had occupations outside the home, a wash woman and a hotel keeper. It is important to note that Mary Shaughnessy was one of the wealthiest persons in

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[61] Ninth Census of the United States, 1870. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 3.

[62] Ninth Census of the United States, 1870. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 4.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ninth Census of the United States, 1870. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 11.

[66] Ninth Census of the United States, 1870. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 13.

Alviso and her 7,000 dollars in personal estate assets were the highest listed for the Alviso Township.[67]

Though the 1880 census discontinued recording both real estate and personal estate assets, the City Directory of San José began to list residents, occupations, acreage, and assets of each township. During the first two years of its publication, no women were listed from Alviso.[68] By 1880 several women were listed. Some notable women listed in the Directory of 1881-82 include Mrs. M.M. Shields (113 acres), Mrs. D.R. Tilden (a store keeper), Mrs. S.E. Tilden (general merchandise), and Miss Mary A. Wade (postmistress).[69] The 1884-85 edition of the Directory saw the addition of Helen McMillen (18 acres), and Miss Mary Trimble (school teacher).[70] Within a few years the Directory added Mrs. E.A. Anderson (farmer), and Lydia Harker (music teacher).[71]

Far more revealing is the Directory of 1889. It listed, via code, the assets of township residents.[72] This edition saw the greatest increase of property owned

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[67] See Appendices C and D.

[68] See The San José City Directory 1870, 241; and Directory of the City of San José 1874, 223.

[69] Directory of the City of San José 1881-82, 245.

[70] San José City Directory 1884-85, 348.

[71] San José City Directory 1887-8, 347.

[72] The publishers recorded real estate (R), personal property (P), improvements (I), and mortgages (M). While these may seem straight forward, the numerical values were assigned a letter. one (S), two (C), three (O), four (T), five (L), six (A), seven (N), eight (D), nine (E), and ten (R), thus spelling out SCOTLANDER. An individual owning 1080 dollars in real estate and 534 dollars in mortgages would be listed as R-srdr M-lto. See San José City Directory 1889, inside cover and 434-36.

by women in Alviso. Inocencia De La Rosa owned 12,285 dollars of real estate, Josephine Richards owned 2790 dollars of real estate, and Mrs. M.M. Shields owned 8860 dollars of real estate.[73]

By 1890 the women of Alviso had become firmly entrenched in both farming and commercial ventures. It is apparent that these women entered the commercial world and made their money either alone or in conjunction with their husbands. Over time, the women no longer made their fortunes by inheritance alone, they earned it. While the early females were relegated to keeping house, the women of the 1880s and 1890s were slowly peeling back the layers of social hindrance for women in the workforce.

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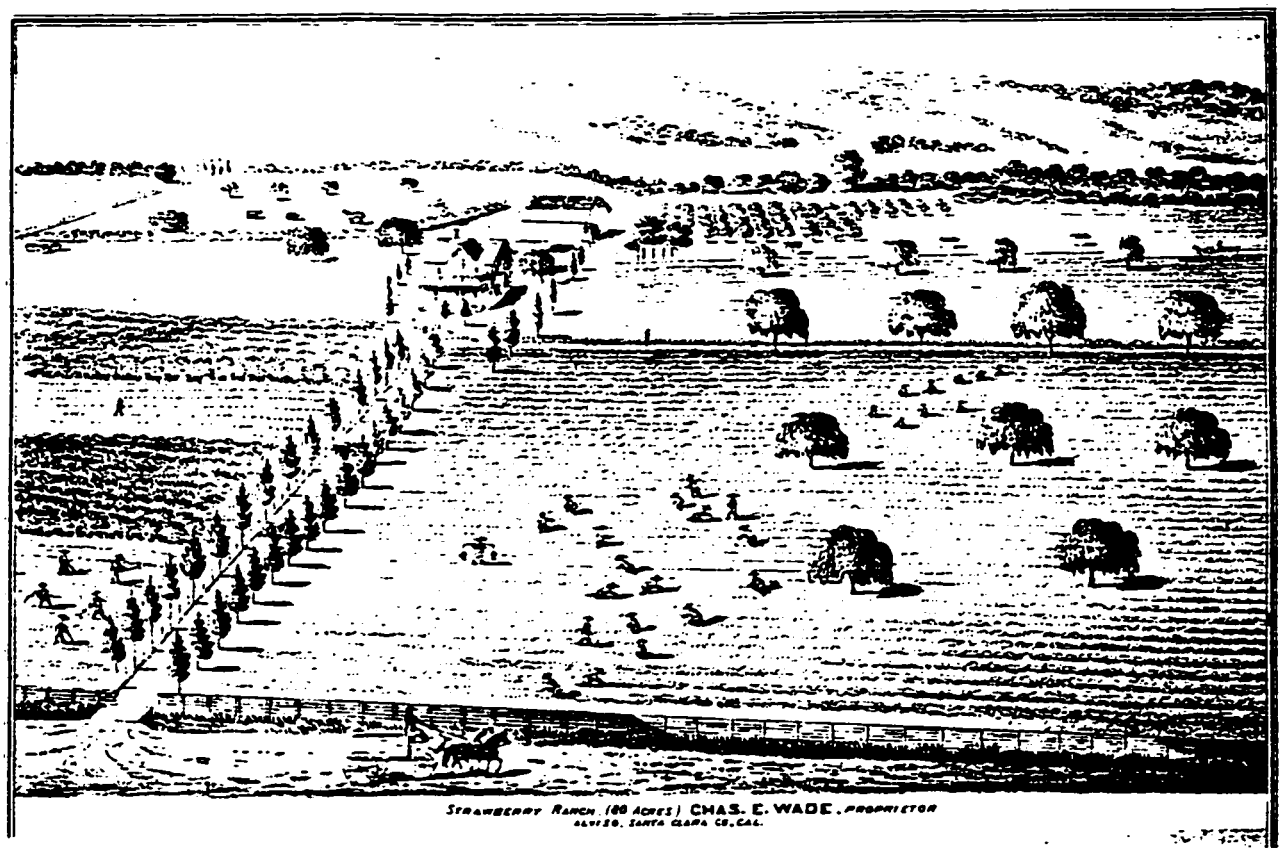
[73] Ibid. Other women are listed, but their assets are less than 1000 dollars.

Illustration 6



Source: Thompson and West, Historical Atlas Map of Santa Clara County (San Francisco: Thompson and West, 1876; reprint, San José: Smith & McKay Printing Company, 1973), 85.

New Chicago

By 1890, Alviso had developed into a self-contained, cohesive coastal community independent of other civic entities. In addition to farming and stockraising, it boasted mercantile establishments, saloons, a public school, a hotel, a boarding house, a lumber company, a stage line between Alviso and San José, and a sportsman's retreat company, presumably to hunt the numerous waterfowl in the marshland areas. There were also plumbers, blacksmiths, a postmaster, an insurance agent, a bookkeeper, and several teamsters residing within its boundaries.[1]

Farming remained the mainstay of the town, but shipping still kept several Alvisans employed. John Ortley and Richard Carr operated warehouses on the slough. There were more warehouses, but they were owned and operated by residents of either San Francisco or San José. If left alone, Alviso might be a sleepy little port town today. But in 1890, Alviso occupied hundreds of acres of undeveloped marshland along the sloughs. The rapacity of land developers, the greed of land speculators, and grand ideas for the future of the town transformed

[1] San José City Directory 1890, 419-21.

it into one of the most imaginative, aggressive, and ultimately disappointing land schemes in California history.

Speculators sought to sell thousands of residential and commercial lots to finance the development of high quality port facilities to expedite the shipment of Santa Clara County products. The plot depended upon the maritime nature of Alviso, and demanded the support of the city of San José. The New Chicago land development scheme closely resembled the speculative venture when Alviso was founded in 1849. It was led by out-of-area wealthy land speculators who were interested in profit, not the betterment of Alviso.

The promoter of New Chicago was P.H. Wheeler. In 1889, Wheeler purchased a defunct watch factory in south San Diego County and wished to relocate. As he had little capital to relocate the watch factory into an existing industrial complex, Wheeler sought cheap land on which he could not only build a factory, but also earn a few dollars in land speculation at the same time.[2]

At Alviso, Wheeler found the combination of cheap land and promising real estate ventures that he sought. By dividing the marshland adjacent to the town of Alviso into lots, this land could be sold under the guise of a new booming port town, with the watch factory as its primary employer. The money gained

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[2] James R. Curtis, "New Chicago of the Far West: Land Speculation in Alviso, California, 1890-1891," 38.

from the lot sales could cover the costs of the factory relocation as well as pay off the bankrupt factory's creditors.[3]

Just as the initial land boom in Alviso involved wealthy and famous individuals, so did the New Chicago scheme. Wheeler recruited John Richards, a San José lawyer and future California Supreme Court Justice, and J.F. Devendorf, who later founded Carmel. These two men were responsible for the legal maneuvering which allowed the defunct watch factory to leave San Diego County. Richards struck a deal with the factory's main creditor, Frank Kimball; Kimball would allow the watch factory to move to Alviso on the condition that he retain first lien if it fell into bankruptcy again.[4]

Wheeler, Richards, and Kimball contested several suits, liens, and labor disputes in the San Diego Superior Court. This litigation kept the factory from moving out of the county until they were resolved. The opposing lawyer was a superior litigator. Zachariah Montgomery, former Attorney General of the United States under President Cleveland, led the fight to keep the factory in San Diego County. When a surprise decision in favor of Wheeler was announced at the end of the business day on Friday, Wheeler and his companions went to the watch factory. They moved the entire contents of the factory into freight cars, and were on the way to Alviso before Montgomery filed an appeal the following

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[3] San José Mercury News, 10 October 1948, 22.

[4] Ibid.

Monday morning. By that time, they were outside the jurisdiction of the San Diego Superior Court.[5] The genesis of New Chicago was auspicious indeed.

In order to sell the thousands of lots needed to pay for the relocation of the watch factory, Wheeler devised a grand scheme for New Chicago based upon its model, the city of Chicago, Illinois. Both were located on marshland at the mouth of great rivers, and both were major transshipment points associated with a great hinterland.[6] Wheeler believed that New Chicago would rise in stature, size, and economic power to rival its archetype.

Wheeler could not do this alone. He found several fellow speculators willing to help him. This group comprised a cadre of political and financial power in the Santa Clara Valley. They included John W. Rea, the Railroad Commissioner of the State of California; George A. Penniman, a wealthy fruit grower in the Valley; Paul P. Austin, Santa Clara County Supervisor; and A.C. Darby and J.C. Roberts, influential real estate dealers in the Bay Area.[7]

The incentive to purchase land depended upon the manufacturing and shipping firms that Wheeler and others could lure into setting up their industries in the small town. The New Chicago developers "proposed to erect warehouses, mills, and manufactories" along the waterfront properties.[8] These new industries

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Curtis, "Alviso, California," 84.

[7] San José Mercury News, 10 October 1948, 22; Curtis, "Alviso, California," 84.

included "numerous factories, boots and shoes, hats and caps, straw goods, wooden ware, box factories, foundries, huge iron works, car shops, sugar refineries, beet sugar crushers, wineries, weaving and spining[sic] mills of all kinds, knitting factories, cotton mills . . . [and] carpet mills."[9] Indeed, "the founders of this town expect to have Spreckels' next sugar refinery located" at New Chicago.[10] This refinery was to save the Santa Clara Valley fruit growers $500,000 in its first year of existence.[11]

The master plan began with the sale of lots to finance transplantation of the watch factory. Meanwhile, the slough would be dredged to facilitate better ship access to the port of Alviso. Wheeler hoped that these two developments would lure more industries to New Chicago. More industries meant more people working in the area, and more people meant a need for more homes and land. The higher demand for land would raise the price of real estate along the estuary, and the speculators would make a fortune when they sold their property. Everybody would be happy.

Yet the heart of New Chicago was not necessarily the new manufacturers, but the establishment of a bona fide deep water shipping center. The arguments

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[8] "New Chicago at Port of Alviso: Some Printed Facts Selected From the Writings of Those Who Know." Issued by the real estate firms of Roberts, Austin & Darby of San José, and Middleton & Sharon of San Francisco, 1890. Manuscript, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 4.

[9] Ibid., 5.

[10] Ibid., 8.

[11] Ibid., 11.

for such a venture echoed the sentiments articulated during the fight over the railroads in 1864 and 1877. New Chicago was destined to "become a great commercial center, and a distributing point for all the vast and highly productive region contiguous to it."[12] These new manufacturers, by themselves, were significant; but the added possibility of a seamless flow of materials from factory to rail to sea was incredibly appealing.

The promoters alleged that San Francisco was losing favor as a shipping point due to its high labor costs and wharfage charges. The waterfront of San Francisco was "inadequate to the needs of our rapidly increasing commerce" of the Santa Clara Valley.[13] Bulk storage in San Francisco was impeded due to the expensive cost of land. It was even said that "San Francisco [was] the highest priced seaport in the world, Liverpool and London not excepted."[14] While San Francisco charged a wharfage rate of $3.50 per ton for coal, the proprietors of New Chicago offered a one-time fee of $1.75, regardless of the size of the load.[15]

The railroads were also losing favor due to high prices and inconvenience. Not only did the railroads charge an average of $28.00 per ton, but the rail cars were loaded in the afternoon, shipped by night, but not unloaded for market until

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[12] Ibid., 3.

[13] Ibid., 4.

[14] Ibid., 11.

[15] Ibid.

nine or ten o'clock the next morning. Shipment by boat via the new waterway would cost only $7.00 per ton, also shipped at night, but unloaded before sunrise.[16] Given the low cost of shipment and the convenience of unloading cargo earlier in the morning, shipment by water was more favorable to South Bay residents in 1890. This idea of a resurgent Alviso as the commercial maritime center of the South Bay brought tales of new maritime industries coming to the area. At one public meeting, it was announced that "eleven vessels have already agreed to come to Alviso Harbor . . . [and] a company is now forming to build a steam tug at Alviso and $1,200 has already been raised for the purpose."[17] This was the type of maritime industry that Alviso had always hoped to attract.

The key to this new harbor project was to dredge and widen the sloughs around Alviso. This effort was twofold: the public would finance the project from the Bay to Alviso, and the federal government would finance it from Alviso to Lick's Mill. This mill was two and one-half miles up river from Alviso and only three and one-half miles from "the courthouse in San José."[18] The closer the waterway was to the main city of San José, the cheaper the shipping costs, and thus more maritime commerce would be attracted to the South Bay.

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[16] Ibid., 23.

[17] Ibid., 10.

[18] Ibid., 3.

The cost was estimated at $100,000 to dredge the slough to a dimension of at least 12 feet deep and 150 feet wide.[19] This task fell upon the River, Harbor and Canal Dredging and Land Company, whose representative and chief engineer was General Albert Boschke. Whether this was a real or fictitious company is still debated.[20] Boschke authorized the San José Board of Trade to sell 20,000 shares of capital stock in the company at $5.00 per share (valued at $10.00 each). Once the public purchased the stock and the company raised the necessary capital, Boschke would guarantee the work. He stated that he could complete the job in only fifteen months.[21]

General Boschke was hailed as the new hope for the revitalization of Alviso. As one publication saw it, the effort was predestined, for,

> God, in his all-wise wisdom, saw fit to raise up one man, Boschke, a civil engineer of great renown, who has superintended dredging, lo, these many years. An he put the thought in this man Boschke's head that he dredge the slough of Alviso that lies adjacent to the fertile Valley of Santa Clara, that the good people of this rich valley may be greatly benefited by the great open sea; that the rich valley, so blessed with much fruit, might have better transportation and at much less cost.[22]

Public support for the canal steadily grew, and the shares sold quickly.

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[19] Yet throughout the pamphlet, "New Chicago at Port of Alviso," the minimum dredging depth is intermittently listed as twenty-two , twenty, and fifteen feet.

[20] James Curtis asserts that the company was probably bogus and the effort to dredge the slough was a ploy to sell more lots. See Curtis, "Alviso California," and "New Chicago of the Far West: Land Speculation in Alviso, California, 1890-1891."

[21] "New Chicago at Port of Alviso," 5, 24.

[22] Ibid., 16.

Boschke foresaw two problems that might complicate the dredging. First, there was no contingency plan for the excavated soil. Second, if the equipment broke down, the cost might exceed $100,000 and the project might take longer than fifteen months. As for the issue of the displaced soil, Boschke planned to use this rich sediment to reclaim the marshland, thus creating new fruit and vegetable fields which could be sold in addition to the lots.[23] This was a popular idea because the marshes stood idle and contributed little to Alviso's economy.

The issue of mechanical breakdown of the dredging machine occupied much press during the debates over New Chicago. Boschke proposed using his own dredging machine, which he had designed and patented. This design, he said, was the culmination of forty years of engineering work for the United States, twenty-five of which was specifically in dredging.[24] His dredging machine could dig twenty thousand cubic yards in a twenty-two hour day, "and [would] never break down."[25] The design had yet to be used, and "in order to build this dredge, it is necessary for the people to buy stock in this company, and as there are no assessments the dividends that will surely come will compensate the buyer in the first outlay handsomely, and with interest that will be satisfactory."[26]

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[23] Ibid., 11.

[24] Ibid., 13.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

This suggests that Boschke may have been in the scheme solely to finance his dredging machine, and not to dredge the slough.

The entire New Chicago scheme depended upon real estate sales. More than six thousand lots were surveyed and plotted.[27] Each lot was 25 x 150 feet in dimension. The streets of New Chicago were named after the streets in Chicago, such as State, Michigan, Wabash, Dearborn, and La Salle.[28]

An appeal went out to Bay Area residents on 30 March 1890, through an extensive advertising campaign in local newspapers, especially the San José Daily Mercury. On that Sunday morning, a full page advertisement depicted "a grand opportunity for investment" in the "coming manufacturing center of California."[29] New Chicago offered a three-and-one-half mile-long tide water canal one hundred and fifty feet wide and fifteen feet deep. Ships drawing twenty feet of water could dock at the future piers with no wharfage charges. Lots ranged in price from $5.00 to $200.00, depending on size and location.

This edition of the Daily Mercury also ran a story regarding New Chicago. The paper assured that the names of the promoters of New Chicago were "not only a guarantee of good faith, but are an assurance that brains, energy, money,

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[27] Curtis indicates that the total number of lots was 6,240. Curtis, "New Chicago of the Far West: Land Speculation in Alviso, California, 1890-1891," 44.

[28] San José Mercury News, 10 October 1948, 22; Curtis, "Alviso, California," 86. "New Chicago at Port of Alviso," 7.

[29] San José Daily Mercury, 30 March 1890, 3.

and enterprise will be continually used to push this new candidate for public favor to the front rank of growing cities and maintain it in the position it is so qualified by its natural advantages to occupy."[30] It went on to discuss the new tidewater canal, the cost of the lots, and the parallel between Alviso and Chicago. The bottom line, however, was that New Chicago was a "Proposed Development of the Port of Alviso by Men of Money and Energy."[31]

Public meetings were held, and the advertisements continued. Almost daily for three months, the San José Daily Mercury ran articles and large advertisements for New Chicago. On the first day, 305 lots were sold ranging in price from $5.00 to $100.00. This surpassed the previous record for sales in one day for San José.[32] By the end of the first week, 803 lots were sold. The purchasers were not citizens of Alviso helping to enhance the future of the town, nor were they commercial enterprises looking to relocate to Alviso, but mainly residents of San Francisco engaging in land speculation.[33] By April 9th, only the eleventh day since sales began, more than one thousand lots had been sold.[34]

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[30] San José Daily Mercury, 30 March 1890, 5.

[31] Ibid., capital letters in original.

[32] San José Daily Mercury, 1 April 1890, 3.

[33] San José Daily Mercury, 6 April 1890, 5.

[34] San José Daily Mercury, 9 April 1890, 3.

The issue was not the betterment of Alviso, but rather "the advantages of speculation in these lots are greater than any property ever offered before."[35]

The rapid sale of New Chicago lots put the advertising agents into a selling fervor. Yet the investment was pure speculation, and this notion was reflected in the advertisements. One advertisement read, "the man who makes money in real estate investments is the man who buys ahead of improvements, in a place where they are sure to come."[36] On April 13th, the paper indicated that more than 1,150 lots had been sold to "the investing public [who] are evidently thoroughly wide awake to the importance of our new enterprise."[37] The paper noted again that the sales were going to residents of San Francisco. One resident of San Francisco purchased 120 lots.[38] The advertisements continued, and 2,311 lots were sold by April 23rd.[39]

Sales then began to stagnate. No further figures are printed in subsequent newspaper advertisements. The advertisements became creative, colorful, and in some instances quite entertaining. One advertisement claimed that although on the surface the buyer was purchasing a lot 25 x 120 feet in area, he was also "entitled to the atmosphere forty-five miles high, or higher if

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[35] Ibid.

[36] San José Daily Mercury, 10 April 1890, 2.

[37] San José Daily Mercury, 13 April 1890, 3.

[38] Ibid.

[39] San José Daily Mercury, 23 April 1890, 2.

you want to utilize all your lot; you are entitled to the earth down over 4000 miles deep running to a point."[40] This amusing notice also suggests that sales were diminishing, for the first person to calculate the area of a 25 x 120 lot with a height of forty-five miles and a depth to the center of the earth would win a lot in New Chicago.

The newspapers were not the only method of promoting New Chicago. Real estate firms published their own pamphlets, furnishing maps and espousing the future riches of the new town. One of these pamphlets, published in 1890, was entitled "New Chicago: Port of Alviso."[41] New Chicago is a "place for you to invest your money safely, and with a certainty of your investment paying you large returns."[42] It appears that the longer New Chicago was advertised, the more print was dedicated to the speculative nature of the town rather than to its potential manufacturing and residential prosperity.

No changes of consequence, however, befell Alviso except for a few minor cosmetic alterations, the most significant of which was the construction of the watch factory. After almost a year of lot sales in New Chicago and stock sales of the dredging company, a debate erupted over the location of the watch factory. In March 1891, Wheeler told a representative of the Daily Mercury that

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[40] San José Daily Mercury, 18 May 1890, 3

[41] "New Chicago: Port of Alviso." Issued by McNeil Brothers of San José, 1890. Manuscript, Special Collections, Wahlquist Library, San José State University.

[42] Ibid.

he intended to locate the factory in Los Gatos rather than New Chicago.[43] By May, however, the matter was settled. The San José Watch Company (located in Alviso) was incorporated on 7 May 1891 with a capital stock of $350,000, of which only $27,000 had been subscribed.[44]

The construction of the factory began after a meeting of the shareholders in late May 1891. By July 1, the office was built and work on the rest of the factory commenced.[45] By the end of that month the plant was shipped from San Diego and all the lumber was unloaded for the final completion of the factory.[46] The machinery for the factory was stored upon ships docked at the wharves of Alviso until late October when the building was finished and the company finally began to solicit stock subscriptions at $10.00 per share.[47]

The watch factory was an absolute failure. When it finally opened in 1891, the San José Watch Factory operated for one day, produced one watch, and promptly closed its doors forever. The costs to wrench the factory from San Diego, purchase land in Alviso, move the entire factory machinery, and hire skilled watchmakers swallowed up more than the $350,000 received from sales

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[43] San José Daily Mercury, 14 March 1891, 4.

[44] San José Daily Mercury, 8 May 1891, 1.

[45] San José Daily Mercury, 26 May 1891, 1; San José Daily Mercury, 1 July 1891, 5.

[46] San José Daily Mercury, 19 July 1891, 7; San José Daily Mercury, 29 July 1891, 5.

[47] San José Daily Mercury, 1 September 1891, 5; San José Daily Mercury, 10 September 1891, 7; San José Daily Mercury, 27 October 1891, 7.

of capital stock. Richards, who had been retained for a $1,000 fee to bring the factory to New Chicago, received nothing except the one and only watch produced. He not so fondly referred to it as "my $1,000 watch."[48]

Apart from the large factory built in Alviso, only two other notable improvements were made during the entire New Chicago scheme. Two miles of road were graded, graveled, and curbed, and a small bridge was built that spanned the Guadalupe River. This bridge led to vacant lots, subdivided and sold, but never built upon. Thus, a road scarcely used was improved and a bridge to nowhere graced the banks of the slough. The slough, though sounded for depth as a precursor for dredging, remained unaltered.

By mid-1890 more than 3,500 lots had been sold and 17,000 shares in Boschke's dredging company purchased. Though this left several lots and shares unsold, clearly enough were sold to begin construction of New Chicago. Did the bridge and the graded road suggest that Wheeler and Boschke were beginning their planned city, or were they simply appeasing uneasy potential investors? Their motives are unclear. The question remains: was New Chicago a purely money making scheme for Wheeler and his investors, or was it a legitimate development project for Alviso and the Guadalupe estuary?

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[48] San José Mercury News, 10 October 1948. A Japanese conglomerate eventually bought the factory and moved it to Japan. It operated for years producing and shipping watches to the Pacific Rim bearing the inscription "Made in San José, California."

The evidence points to a combination of both. If all of the lots and shares of the dredging company had been sold, then Wheeler would have had enough money to move his company, set up shop, and do a good deal of business without threat of bankruptcy. The success of his factory would have attracted new business. As a leader in the community, Wheeler could have become a rich man. If Boschke had sold all of his shares and New Chicago begun to develop, then he would have had enough money to build his dredging machine as well as an excellent location at which to demonstrate its effectiveness. In an era of dredging on a massive scale (Panama, Nicaragua, Suez), the Alviso slough would have been an easy waterway in which to prove the viability of his new machine. The successful dredging of the Alviso slough could have catapulted his private enterprise in dredging and made him a rich man.

In reality, Alviso lost another battle and remained economically docile. Wheeler and Boschke took the money raised from the lot sales and stock shares and fled Santa Clara County. Despite numerous lawsuits, the money was never recovered. Alviso's fate was essentially ignored during the whole scheme. Public meetings on the subject were held in San Francisco and San José. The real estate agents for the project were also located in San Francisco and San José. The lots were marketed and sold to residents of these two cities, not to the existing residents of Alviso. The watch factory was called the San José Watch Factory, even though it was actually located in Alviso. The stamp on the

back of the watches produced read "made in San José." Even during Alviso's greatest opportunity for economic revival, Alviso's residents were not allowed to participate in their future.

Alviso residents were caught between the greed of developers and the greed of speculators. Not one viable or usable improvement benefited the town. In fact, the land that could have been used to develop the town was lost, sold to thousands of out-of-town residents who no longer cared about the success of the Guadalupe estuary. Alviso residents no longer controlled its future growth, for they no longer owned the adjoining land. Alviso had again been promised greatness, only to be disappointed by circumstances beyond its control.

Epilogue

The history of Alviso in the twentieth century is just as, if not more, intriguing than that of the last century. The themes remained the same: demographics shifted dramatically, outside forces controlled the future of the town, and Alviso still hoped for a deep-water port. Although agriculture continued to dominate the Alviso economy, the canning industry soon took prominence. Alviso was perfectly located to do this. Real estate prices were low, and Alviso was located near both sea and rail. The Bayside Cannery was founded in the 1890s by Yen Chew, a Chinese immigrant. In 1906 ownership passed to his son, Thomas Foon Chew. Under his leadership the cannery became a major economic power in Santa Clara Valley.[1]

World War I exacerbated the need for canned goods, and by 1920 the Bayside Cannery was the third largest cannery in Santa Clara County, producing some 600,000 cases per year.[2] Upon the death of Thomas Foon Chew, the

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[1] The demography of the cannery workers is significant, for it defied the status of Chinese workers elsewhere in California during the early years of the twentieth century. Most of the permanent employees were Chinese, but the seasonal workers were Italian or Sicilian. See Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, Santa Clara County, California: Its Climate, Resources, and Industries, 1915, 27.

[2] J.C. Wright, "Thomas Foon Chew: Founder of Bayside Cannery," in Chinese Argonauts, 27. The two largest canneries were Del Monte and Libby's.

cannery fell into the hands of inept management. Buffeted during the Great Depression, the cannery failed, displacing hundreds of workers and eliminating one of Alviso's greatest assets. After the factory closed, Chinese residents slowly left the town. During the 1940s, the Chinese were replaced by a Mexican-American majority which remains to this day.[3]

In addition to the major demographic transformation from a predominately Chinese population to a Mexican-American community, two other themes dominate the history of Alviso in the twentieth century: annexation and the quest for the elusive deep water port. The first attempt to annex a portion of Alviso and develop the harbor began in 1912. The Port of San José Committee sought to annex the northern portion of land along the town limits of Alviso to develop large port facilities. The city of San José voted to annex the land by a vote of 4,225 to 76.[4] Alviso residents were not allowed to vote on the fate of their own property.

The federal government approved a project to develop the Guadalupe estuary in 1932. The recommendation and subsequent amendments included a channel running from Dumbarton Point to Alviso, with a turning basin at its southern end.[5] However, fate frowned upon Alviso once again. After forty years

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[3] For an examination of the development of the Mexican-American transformation of Alviso, see Ernesto Galarza, Alviso, Crisis of a Barrio.

[4] San José Daily Mercury, 28 November 1912, 1, 8.

[5] See Rivers and Harbors Improvement Act, Statutes at Large 49 (1935), 1028-1049; War Department and Army Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 1937, Statutes at Large 49 (1936), 1278-1309; Report From the Chief of Engineers On Preliminary examinations and Survey of Lower San Francisco Bay and Guadalupe River, California, and preliminary Examination of Port of San

of hope, Congress deauthorized the funds to develop the Guadalupe estuary.[6] The Port of San José and its economic benefits did not materialize.

San José always wanted to have Alviso and its port facilities under its control. If the Port of Alviso was eventually to be deepened, widened, and facilities built to sustain significant maritime commerce, San José wanted a piece of the action. Several other attempts at outright annexation occurred during the twentieth century, culminating in a successful attempt in 1968.[7] Alvisan residents voted by a slim margin to incorporate into San José.[8] The promises that San José made to Alviso (port facilities, dredging, improved infrastructure) in exchange for the annexation vote never materialized. A deannexation effort, coupled with several lawsuits, ensued, culminating in the status quo: Alviso resents San José's influence, and both the town of Alviso and the slough remain undeveloped, unimproved, and, in the eyes of its larger neighbor, unimportant.

Francisco East of Belmont, South San Francisco Bay, California, U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, House Document 279, 72nd Congress, 1st Session, 1932; Report of the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors On Review of Reports Heretofore Submitted on Lower San Francisco Bay and Guadalupe River, California, U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, House Document 8, 73rd Congress, 1st Session, 1933.

[6] See Projects Recommended For Deauthorization: First Annual Report: Communication From the Secretary of the Army Transmitting A Report Recommending Deauthorization of Certain Projects, Pursuant to Section 12 of Public Law 93-251, U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, House Document 94-192, 94th Congress, 1st Session, 1975.

[7] This included a major attempt in 1959. See San José Reporter, 6 May 1959, 1; San José Mercury, 17 September 1958, 19. Other unsuccessful attempts occurred in 1961 and 1962. See San José Mercury, 2 February 1961, 1; San José Mercury, 11 April 1962, 61.

[8] See San José Mercury, 10 January 1968, 1.

The history of Alviso during the nineteenth century revolves around three themes. First and foremost, Alviso was inextricably linked with the Guadalupe estuary. Second, the demography of the port town dramatically shifted during the nineteenth century. Last, Alviso's lack of control over its own destiny hastened its demise.

In the twentieth century, all three themes persisted. The Guadalupe River remained at the center of the town's hopes for economic redevelopment. A deep-water port never materialized and the slough remains undredged, incapable of sustaining any ships with a draft greater than a rowboat. The issue of control continued. Redevelopment efforts were proposed by the City of San José, which even annexed portions of Alviso to create a harbor. Alviso residents had no control over these movements within their own town limits. Alviso no longer has a voice in its future.

Since 1968 Alviso has been a part of San José. Politically, Alviso no longer exists as an independent city. As a community, however, Alviso remains a cohesive entity, despite its lack of political power. Demographically, Alviso shifted again in the 1940s to a predominately Mexican-American population. This cultural make-up developed into a cohesive, unified community. Annexation was intended to reinvigorate Alviso. Quite the opposite occurred. An annexed Alviso became the site of the City of San José's landfill depot and sewage treatment plant.

Today a stroll along the banks of the Guadalupe River illuminates the plight of Alviso. Its marina is overrun with tule, boats sit idle in the marshland mud, and docks project onto dry land. Water is seen only in the slough, unable to accommodate any watercraft with a significant draft. The South Bay Yacht Club sits prominently behind a levee built to keep the river in its banks. The only boat still owned by the yacht club sits idle upon dry land in front of the entrance to the building.

The Yacht Club is an eerie reminder of what Alviso once was: the sole maritime center of the Santa Clara Valley. It also indicates Alviso's current status: the backwater of San José, good for little save land fill and sewage. It is unclear what the future of Alviso will be. This, however, is certain: Alviso has a rich and colorful history as a significant and important town in the development of Santa Clara County. Its current status is a pale reflection of its former glory, and should not diminish its notable role in the history of the Santa Clara County.

Appendix A - *Jenny Lind* Fatalities

Name	Residence	Notes
Beauchamp, Atalie	San Francisco, CA	Mother
Beauchamp, Blanch	San Francisco, CA	Child
Beauchamp, Charles	San Francisco, CA	Child
Behn, Adolph	Mexico	Age 5
Behn, Edward	n/a	
Bosworth, Franklin W.	Buffalo, NY	
Bradbury, Mr.	n/a	
Bradbury, John S.	Gifford, NY	
Brady, John	New Orleans, LA	
Carpentier, M.	France	
Drake, Lafayette F.	Portage, OH	
Emerson, Charles	Bucksport, MO	
Hawkins, Jonas	Geneva, NY	
Hoppe, J.P.	San José, CA	Alviso Founder
Hopkins, James	Geneva, NY	
Kell, Thomas	Quebec	
Kimball, Mrs.	n/a	
Macabee, Francis Henry	Yonkers, NY	
Murphy, Bernard	San José, CA	
Page, Emma	San Francisco, CA	Age 3
Page, Mrs. S.A.	n/a	
Ripley, Charles Edward	Barre, MS	Age 6
Ripley, Mary B.T.	Barre, MS	Wife
Ripley, Noah	Barre, MS	Husband
Ripley, Sarah Francis	Barre, MS	Age 10
Shelton, C.A.	San Francisco, CA	
Van Buren, Jeremiah	Greeenbush, NY	
Child of Mrs. L.B. Westfall	n/a	Age 1
White, Charles	San José, CA	Alviso Founder
Wenlac, Mrs. J.B.	Santa Clara, CA	
An Unknown Man	n/a	

Source: The Pioneer, 29 September, 1877, 2.

Appendix B - Age Distribution 1860-1880

Age	1860	1870	1880	Age	1860	1870	1880
Male				Female			
0-9	94	78	57	0-9	109	70	39
10-19	49	60	128	10-19	58	32	30
20-29	157	95	148	20-29	70	35	26
30-39	150	85	119	30-39	35	26	16
40-49	41	45	77	40-49	16	12	16
50-59	25	32	30	50-59	8	6	4
60-69	19	5	19	60-69	2	1	4
70-79	1	3	2	70-79	0	1	0
80-89	2	0	5	80-89	0	1	1
90-99	1	0	0	90-99	0	1	0
Total	**539**	**403**	**585**	**Total**	**298**	**185**	**136**

All			
0-9	203	148	96
10-19	107	92	158
20-29	227	130	174
30-39	185	111	135
40-49	57	57	93
50-59	33	38	34
60-69	21	6	23
70-79	1	4	2
80-89	2	1	6
90-99	1	1	0
Total	**837**	**588**	**721**

Source: Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Eighth Census of the United States, 1860. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 173-194. Cabinet 3, Drawer 6, Reel 65; Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Ninth Census of the United States, 1870. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 1-15. Cabinet 6, Drawer 2, Reel 88; Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Tenth Census

of the United States, 1880. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 1-16. Cabinet 9, Drawer 2, Reel 82.

Appendix C - Wealthiest Alviso Residents, 1860

Name	Assets-Real Estate	Occupation
McLaughlin	15,000	Farmer
Valentin Higuero	12,000	Stock Farmer
S. Adams	10,000	Flour Mill
Antonio Alisa	10,000	Farmer
S. Rawley	10,000	Flour Mill
C. Ingleson	8,000	Farmer
S. Miller	8,000	Blacksmith
William O'Toole	6,000	Farmer
John Sinatt	6,000	Farmer
N. Welch	6,000	Farmer

Name	Assets- Personal	Occupation
S. Adams	8,000	Flour Mill
Carral Clark	8,000	Farmer
Henry Davis	8,000	Farmer
Richard Carr	7,000	Merchant
Fite De La Rosa	7,000	Broker
Josiah Evans	7,000	Farmer
Frederick Creighton	6,000	Merchant
N. Gregory	6,000	Farmer
Leo Parker	6,000	Farmer

Total Assets - Alviso, 1860	
Real Estate	138,900
Personal Estate	219,865
Total	**358,765**

Source: Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Eighth Census of the United States, 1860. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 173-194. Cabinet 3, Drawer 6, Reel 65.

Appendix D - Wealthiest Alviso Residents, 1870

Name	Assets-Real Estate	Occupation
William Boots	34,000	Farmer
John O'Toole	30,000	Farmer
William O'Toole	30,000	Farmer
Charles Wade	20,000	Farmer
William Erkson	16,000	Farmer
Guadalupe Berryessa	14,000	Farmer
Frederick Gwin	14,000	Farmer
Augustine Alviso	13,000	Farmer
Thomas Smith	12,000	Farmer
Stephen Bloomfield	10,000	Farmer
James Fogarty	10,000	Farmer
John Ortley	10,000	Warehouseman

Name	Assets-Personal	Occupation
Mary Shaughnessy	7,000	Keeping House
William Boots	4,900	Farmer
John Martin	3,700	Boatman
William Erkson	3,500	Farmer
Dudley Evans	3,000	Farmer
William O'Toole	3,000	Farmer
Michael Balleau	2,600	Farmer
Stephen Bloomfield	2,000	Farmer
Charles Evans	2,000	No Employ
David Tilden	2,000	Merchant Ret.

Total Assets - Alviso, 1870	
Real Estate	329,640
Personal Estate	100,925
Total	**430,565**

Source: Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Ninth Census of the United States, 1870. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 1-15. Cabinet 6, Drawer 2, Reel 88.

Appendix E - Alviso Occupations, 1860

Occupation	Population	Occupation	Population
Farm Laborer	172	Miller	2
Farmer	94	Wagon Maker	2
Day Laborer	79	Butcher	1
Servant	16	Broker	1
Mill Laborer	6	Cook	1
Blacksmith	5	Engineer	1
Carpenter	4	Iron Moulder	1
Clerk	4	Liquor Store	1
Hotel Keeper	3	Livery Stable	1
Merchant	3	Lumber Merchant	1
School Teacher	3	Painter	1
Stock Farmer	3	Sailor	1
Commission Merchant	2	Shoemaker	1
Flour Mill	2	Unknown	3
Machinist	2		
		Total	**416**

Source: Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Eighth Census of the United States, 1860. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 173-194. Cabinet 3, Drawer 6, Reel 65.

Appendix F - Alviso Occupations, 1870

Occupation	Population	Occupation	Population
Keeping House	75	Miller	2
Farmer	56	Miner	2
Reclaiming Marsh	54	Warehouse Clerk	2
Cultivating Strawberries	52	Watchman	2
Laborer	35	Winemaker	2
Farm Laborer	22	Assistant Cook	1
Teamster	8	Boat Captain	1
At Home	7	Bookkeeper	1
At School	6	Clerk in Store	1
Boatman	6	Dairyman	1
Cook	5	Dress Maker	1
Domestic Servant	5	Drive Team	1
Fisherman	5	Engineer	1
Carpenter	4	Iron Moulder	1
No Employ	4	Hotel Keeper	1
Blacksmith	3	Justice of the Peace	1
Cultivate Blackberries	3	Merchant	1
Warehouseman	3	Physician	1
Butcher	2	Saloon Keeper	1
Boathand	2	Ship Carpenter	1
Commission Merchant	2	Tailor	1
Gardener	2	Vaquero	1
Hunter	2	Vine Grower	1
Milliner	2	Wash Woman	1
		Total	**394**

Source: Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Ninth Census of the United States, 1870. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 1-15. Cabinet 6, Drawer 2, Reel 88.

Appendix G - Alviso Occupations, 1880

Occupation	Population	Occupation	Population
Laborer	404	Dress Maker	1
At School	90	Gardener	1
Keep House	60	General Work	1
Farmer	39	Justice of the Peace	1
At Home	11	Keep Saloon	1
Teamster	8	Land Agent	1
Farm Laborer	5	Miller	1
Carpenter	2	Post Mistress	1
Hotel Keeper	2	Raises Strawberries	1
Teacher	2	Servant	1
Washhouse	2	Student of Law	1
Work in Warehouse	2	Stage Proprietor	1
Assistant Postmaster	1	Tailor	1
At College	1	Warehouse Clerk	1
Butcher	1	Warehouse Keeper	1
Captain of Schooner	1	Well Borer	1
Clerk in Store	1	Wheelwright	1
Commission Merchant	1	Unknown	3
		Total	**653**

Source: Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Tenth Census of the United States, 1880. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 1-16. Cabinet 9, Drawer 2, Reel 82.

Appendix H - Places of Origin, 1860

Domestic	Population
California	345
New York	89
Maine	27
Missouri	22
Ohio	19
Kentucky	17
Illinois	13
Michigan	11
Pennsylvania	11
Connecticut	9
Indiana	9
Maryland	8
Massachusetts	7
Utah Territory	7
New Jersey	6
Virginia	5
Nebraska	4
Wisconsin	4
Louisiana	2
New Hampshire	2
Rhode Island	2
Tennessee	2
Arkansas	1
Delaware	1
Iowa	1
Minnesota	1
Sandwich Islands	1
Vermont	1
Total Domestic	**627**

Foreign	Population
Ireland	54
Mexico	34
England	28
Chile	20
Canada	18
Scotland	14
France	13
Germany	4
New Zealand	4
Switzerland	3
Norway	2
Sweden	2
Prussia	2
Argentina	1
Austria	1
China	1
Denmark	1
Peru	1
Spain	1
West Indies	1
Unknown	5
Total Foreign	**210**

Source: Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Eighth Census of the United States, 1860. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 173-194. Cabinet 3, Drawer 6, Reel 65.

Appendix I - Places of Origin, 1870

Domestic	Population
California	197
New York	43
Massachusetts	16
Pennsylvania	10
Maine	7
Illinois	6
New Jersey	6
Michigan	5
Ohio	4
Maryland	3
Connecticut	2
Indiana	2
Nebraska	2
Delaware	1
Iowa	1
Kentucky	1
New Hampshire	1
North Carolina	1
Rhode Island	1
Vermont	1
Virginia	1
Total Domestic	**311**

Foreign	Population
China	121
Ireland	66
Chile	34
Canada	11
France	11
England	9
Mexico	8
Germany	4
Prussia	3
Sweden	3
Greece	2
Azores	1
Italy	1
Scotland	1
West Indies	1
Zanzibar	1
Total Foreign	**277**

Source: Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Ninth Census of the United States, 1870. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 1-15. Cabinet 6, Drawer 2, Reel 88.

Appendix J - Places of Origin, 1880

Domestic	Population
California	179
New York	31
Michigan	10
Pennsylvania	8
Wisconsin	6
Massachusetts	5
Ohio	5
Indiana	4
Nevada	2
Rhode Island	2
Delaware	1
Georgia	1
Kansas	1
Maine	1
Maryland	1
Nebraska	1
New Jersey	1
Oregon	1
Total Domestic	**260**

Foreign	Population
China	374
Ireland	22
England	19
Portugal	6
France	5
Azores	4
Canada	4
Italy	4
Prussia	4
Mexico	3
Germany	3
Scotland	3
Austria	2
Sweden	2
Australia	1
Chile	1
Denmark	1
Unknown	3
Total Foreign	**461**

Source: Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Tenth Census of the United States, 1880. Unpaginated Microfilm, National Archives, San Bruno, California. Alviso Township, Schedule 1, 1-16. Cabinet 9, Drawer 2, Reel 82.

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